FRANK MILLER ★ DAVE GIBBONS

MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR

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MARTHA™ WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR

FRANK MILLER WRITER

DAVE GIBBONS ARTIST

ANGUS McKIE COLORIST

JERRY PROSSER & BARBARA KESEL SERIES EDITORS

LYNN ADAIR COLLECTION EDITOR

TEENA GORES COLLECTION DESIGNER

BRIAN GOGOLIN COLLECTION DESIGN MANAGER

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FRANK MILLER ★ DAVE GIBBONS

MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR

1: THE KILLING FIELDS

2014

AMERICA ON THE MARCH

PAXTV

A NATION DIVIDED, THEY CALL US--BUT WE ARE ONE NATION -- UNDER GOD -- INDIVISIBLE!

AND, LED BY STATE-OF-THE-ART WARPLANES, TARGETING WITH SURGICAL PRECISION, OUR OWN PEACE FORCE IS BRINGING AMERICA BACK TO AMERICANS!

OUR HEROIC FIGHTER PILOTS CUT A SWATH THROUGH THE BLOATED, FATTENED CATTLEFIELDS OF NEW MEXICO -- FREEING THEM FROM THE FORCES OF THE OUTLAW FAT BOY BURGERS CORPORATION!

AND SHOULD ANY OF OUR TRAITOROUS ENEMIES DOUBT OUR TECHNOLOGICAL KNOW-HOW, WE'LL GIVE THEM A LESSON OR TWO IN AMERICAN INGENUITY!

PAXTV

CENTRAL, THIS IS RUGRAT. WE ARE IN POSITION. CHECKING SYSTEMS.

WE READ YOU, RUGRAT. GIVE 'EM HELL.

Systems check complete. No errors found. Unit ready for combat simulation.

DAMN IT--NO-- THIS IS **NOT** A **SIMULATION**!

GIVE ME A **PARTICLE BEAM**, YOU HUNK OF **JUNK**! A **REAL** ONE! **NOW**!

AAAAA

Particle beam simulation ready.

P.A.X

RUGRAT, WE'RE READING A **PROGRAM** MALFUNC-TION...

BOOM

MY NAME'S **MARTHA WASHINGTON**. I'M A **SOLDIER**.

THIS IS THE **SECOND AMERICAN CIVIL WAR**.

THEY'VE GOT ME TRYING OUT **WEAPONRY** THAT'S NEVER BEEN **COMBAT TESTED**.

YEAAA

THE **PROBLEM** IS THAT NOTHING THEY EVER **INVENT** THESE DAYS **WORKS**.

POOM

Very good, Lieutenant. That would have been a **direct hit**.

CENTRAL, THIS IS RUGRAT. I'M DUMPING THIS THING.

FAT BOY

ACK-NOWLEDGED, RUGRAT -- BUT YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN OUT THERE.

AND JUST SO YOU'LL **KNOW** --WE'RE READING A FULL **DIVISION** OF HOSTILE TROOPS HEADING STRAIGHT **FOR** YOU!

BREKK

DESTROY THIS PROTO-TYPE BEFORE THEY CAN GET THEIR HANDS ON IT. YOUR LIFE IS EXPENDABLE--

SQUEEP!

WHUFF

KUNKK

DHUFF!

BREKK

YIIIIII

BREKK

BOOM

BAT BOY
BOOM
POOM
I'VE ALWAYS LIKED COMPUTERS.
THEY'RE EASY TO TRICK.
WHOOF!
POOM
COME ON COME ON COME ON YOU HUNK OF JUNK...
PAK
SKEEE

EEEE
BOOM

RUMBL

VROOM
POOM
POOM

I WISH ALL THIS WAS AS *SIMPLE* AS IT IS ON THOSE DAMN *VIDEO MAPS*.

IN THE SPACE OF HOURS -- THE **PRIMARY OBJECTIVE** OF OPERATION **BIG BLUE** IS **ACHIEVED**!

AMERICA **RULES** THE SKIES OVER **NEW MEXICO**! BUT VICTORY CANNOT BE **SECURED** BY AIR POWER **ALONE**!

NEXT COME OUR **GROUND TROOPS** -- RESOURCEFUL, FIERCE -- YET **COMPASSIONATE** -- BRINGING THE **NEW HOPE** THAT IS THE **NEW AMERICA**! A NATION **REBORN**!

GOD BLESS AMERICA! LET FREEDOM RING!

PAXTV

PAXTV

TEXAS
PFOOM
BOOM
CUT OFF FROM MY SQUAD I MADE A RUN ACROSS THE BORDER. TO TEXAS.
TEXANS TAKE THEIR BORDERS REALLY SERIOUSLY.

UNFF
BRAKABRAKABRAKABRAKAB

BRAKA BRAKA

RAKKARAKK

BRAKKA BRAKKA

PUT THAT DAMNED THING AWAY, GIRL. I WON'T HURT YOU. HELL, I JUST SAVED YOUR FOOL LIFE.

GOT ANY **FOOD** ON YOU?

NO. SORRY. RAN OUT A FEW DAYS BACK MYSELF.

LORD, WHAT I'D GIVE FOR A *STEAK* AND A *BREW*. *STUPID* WAR.

THE NAME'S *TEX*. TEX BERN-STEIN.

BERNSTEIN?

THAT'S MY NAME. DON'T WEAR IT OUT.

I'M MARTHA WASHINGTON. THANKS FOR NOT KILLING ME.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN *SURPRISED* BY HIS *NAME*. I KNEW AN *APACHE* NAMED *WASSERSTEIN* ONCE.

BUT I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT HIM.

KILL YOU? HELL, I'M SICK OF THE KILLING. BEEN LIVING LIKE A *RAT* FOR *WEEKS*. MY *BEACON* CAUGHT A BULLET SO I'M *FAIR GAME* FOR THOSE *CHOPPERS*.

I JUST WISH *SOMEBODY* WOULD *WIN* THIS WAR AND GET IT OVER WITH. DOESN'T MATTER *WHO*.

WORD I GET IS THAT *PAX* IS ABOUT TO FINISH THINGS OFF. BUT THEY *ALWAYS* SAY THAT...

...QUIET. SOMEBODY'S COMING.

NO SENSE GETTING ALL WORKED UP, WASH-INGTON. IF IT'S *SCAVENGERS*, WELL, THEY DON'T GIVE *LIVING* FOLKS ANY TROUBLE--

--AND IF IT'S *GHOSTS*, THEY'LL DO WHAT-EVER THEY *WANT* TO AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO *STOP* THEM.

GHOSTS? WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

NAH, IT'S JUST SCAVENGERS. WE'RE SAFE.

YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT *GHOSTS*.

YEAH. THE GHOSTS. I FIRST HEARD ABOUT THEM SIX MONTHS BACK, AT FORT WORTH. DIDN'T PUT MUCH STOCK IN THE STORY-- NOT UNTIL LATER, ANYWAY.

SOME FOLKS SAY THEY'RE **WAR DEAD**, BACK FOR **REVENGE**.

JUST BECAUSE I'M A **GIRL**, DON'T THINK YOU CAN **SCARE** ME WITH STUFF LIKE THAT.

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GHOSTS.

HOW OLD ARE YOU, WASHINGTON? SIXTEEN?

NINE-TEEN.

YOU'RE YOUNG-LOOKING FOR YOUR AGE. YOU'LL BE GLAD OF THAT WHEN YOU'RE OLDER.

AND YOU'LL BE SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT **ANYTHING** CAN HAPPEN, THIS DAY AND AGE. WE GOT OUTER SPACE **LASER CANNONS** AND **PSYCHICS** AND **CLONES** AND **ROBOTS**. AND WE GOT US **GHOSTS**, TOO.

SO YOU'RE SAYING YOU'VE **SEEN** THEM?

WELL, **NO**, NOT IF YOU PUT IT THAT WAY. NOBODY'S **SEEN** THEM. THEY'RE **INVISIBLE**. BUT YOU SURE AS HELL CAN SEE WHAT THEY CAN **DO**.

I RAN INTO THEM BACK WHEN I WAS WORKING **ARTILLERY** UP AT **VERNON**, ON THE OKLAHOMA BORDER WE WERE SETTING TO LOB A BUNCH OF **MINI-NUKES** OVER TO YOU **PAX** FOLKS--

..YOU KNOW, THOSE LITTLE BEAUTIES NO BIGGER THAN A **FOOTBALL**?

I KNOW THE KIND

WELL, THEN A **WIND** KICKED UP LIKE NOBODY HAD EVER **SEEN**--AND WE GET **HURRICANES**, ROUND THESE PARTS. IT KNOCKED THE **CANNONS** FLAT. US IT TOSSED AROUND LIKE **LEAVES**.

AND THAT'S WHEN THINGS STARTED GETTING REALLY WEIRD.

SUDDENLY THERE WAS **TREAD MARKS** AND **BOOT PRINTS** APPEARING ALL OVER THE GROUND. AND THE **CANNONS** STARTED FALLING TO **PIECES** -- **PARTS** JUST PLAIN SLIDING OUT OF **PARTS**.

AND THERE WAS NOBODY YOU COULD **SEE** DOING ALL THIS.

DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY. YOU WEREN'T THERE YOU JUST DON'T **KNOW**.

THE NEXT THING WE ALL KNEW WE WAS **WAKING UP**. IT WAS **LATER** WE FOUND OUT OUR **MINI-NUKES** HAD BEEN TURNED INTO NOTHING MORE USEFUL THAN **DOORSTOPS**.

THEY WERE **DIS-MANTLED**?

NO! TO **LOOK** AT THEM THEY WERE **FINE**. BUT THEY WERE **DUDS**. THE **PLUTONIUM** WAS STILL *IN* THEM, BUT IT WAS **DEAD**.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

HAVE IT YOUR WAY--DAMN, THAT'S A LOT OF **SCAVENGERS** FOR ONE NIGHT.

THEY'RE RUNNING FROM SOME-THING.

YEAH, AND WHOEVER IT IS -- IT'S BAD NEWS FOR **ONE** OF US, WASHINGTON.

WOAH...

GET DOWN!

YOU OVER THERE-- FREEZE!

PUT THE GUN DOWN, WASHINGTON. I GOT A LOOK AT THEM. THEY'RE ON MY SIDE. I GOT TO TAKE YOU PRISONER.

DON'T THINK TWICE ABOUT IT. IT'S THE ONLY WAY. IF IT LOOKS LIKE I'M LETTING YOU OFF EASY, IT'S A **FIRING SQUAD** FOR ME--

--AND IF YOU MAKE A **RUN** FOR IT, THEY'LL CUT YOU DOWN **COLD**. BUT THOSE **LIEUTENANT'S BARS** OF YOURS WILL MAKE SURE THEY WANT YOU **ALIVE**. FOR **QUESTIONING**.

LOOK AT IT THIS WAY--AT LEAST YOU'LL GET A GOOD **MEAL** --**HEY**--

BLAM

GAAK

KRAK

THE **MEAL** SOUNDS LIKE A **GOOD** IDEA. MEAT'S **LEGAL** HERE--

--I COULD GET A **HAMBURGER**--

PAK

--BUT I'VE HEARD A LOT OF **STORIES** ABOUT HOW THE **LONE STAR REPUBLIC** TREATS **PRISONERS**--ESPECIALLY **GIRLS**--

CHIK

BREKK

--AND EVEN IF THE STORIES AREN'T **TRUE**-- THEY'RE **SCARY**.

OH, NO.

IT'S LIKE THE **CAPTAIN** SAID THE OTHER DAY. I'VE GONE **SOFT**.

REK

SHE'D BE **YELLING** AT ME IF SHE SAW THIS.

USING A **SONIC GRENADE** MAKES THE JOB **HARDER**. IT DOESN'T **KILL** THEM.

OH **MAN** OH **DAMN** IT YOU LITTLE **BRAT** MY **HEAD** MY **HEAD** ...

KUDR

...BUT I **GOT** YOU BRAT--

IT JUST GIVES THEM A **HEADACHE**. IT DOESN'T **KILL** THEM LIKE I'M SUPPOSED TO.

BUT IT'S LIKE TEX **SAID** -- I'M **SICK** OF THE KILLING.

KRUK

--I GOT-- GNAAA

JUST DROP IT. I COVERED MY EARS. YOUR BRAINS ARE SCRAMBLED. MINE AREN'T. I WON'T KILL YOU.

DAMN STRAIGHT YOU WON'T.

YOU'RE DONE KILLING, GIRL. IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO BE DYING OR TALKING..

..OR WHATEVER THE HELL ELSE WE WANT YOU TO BE DOING.

DAMN STRAIGHT YOU WILL...

DAMN STRAIGHT.

DAMN STRAIGHT.

DAMN STRAIGHT.

DAMN STRAIGHT.

DAMN STRAIGHT.

DAMN STRAIGHT.

...WE HEARD PLENTY ABOUT WHAT YOU PAX HAVE BEEN DOING TO OUR WOMEN AND KIDS --

EEEEE

..AW AW! NO!

OUT OF NOWHERE IT COMES

THIS IS IT.

WE'RE TAKING TEXAS.

I HATE BEING THERE WHEN BOMBS DROP. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN OR WHERE THEY'RE GOING TO HIT.

THERE'S NO TIME TO THINK. NO TIME TO PRAY.

TIRELESS, OUR BRAVE PILOTS-- GOD-LIKE IN BOTH THEIR POWER-- AND THEIR MERCY--

-- NOW TAKE THE BATTLE EAST TO LIBERATE THE GOOD PEOPLE OF TEXAS FROM THE YOKE OF DICTATORSHIP--

PAXTV

-- ALL THE WHILE AS CAREFUL AS THEY ARE FORCEFUL-- SPARING THE INNOCENT-- AND PUNISHING THE GUILTY!

GOD BLESS AMERICA! LET FREEDOM RING!

EVERYTHING'S SO COLD. I'M DYING. I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

STATUS DEEPSHIT, MARTHA. HANG ON. DON'T DIE.

HNFF?

RAGGY-ANN... NO. YOU'RE NOT REAL.

OVER HERE. IT LOOKS BAD.

NO. THIS IS JUST A DELUSION. YOU'RE DEAD, RAGGYANN. I SAW THE REPORT. YOU DIED WITH WASSER-STEIN.

BIGLIE, MARTHA! RAGGYANN HAPPY WIRE-HEAD NOW. NO ZIPLOCK.

RAGGYANN'S MY FRIEND SHE'S A LITTLE CRAZY AND SHE'S PSYCHIC.

AND SHE'S DEAD.

GHOSTS... TEX TALKED ABOUT GHOSTS. MAYBE THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE. I'M TIRED, NOW. I NEED TO SLEEP.

MARTHA. DON'T DIE, MARTHA. YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND.

GHOSTS. DEAD PEOPLE. RAGGYANN, WASSERSTEIN...

...WASSERSTEIN...

...WASSERSTEIN...

HER BLOOD PRESSURE'S DROPPING THROUGH THE FLOOR --HER SPINE IS CRUSHED--

OXYGEN --THERE'S BLOOD IN HER LUNGS--

CARDIAC ARREST! FLATLINE! WE'RE LOSING HER!

DEFIB-RILLATE! NOW!

...WASSERSTEIN...

...WASSERSTEIN WAS BIG AND STRONG AND REALLY NICE. AND HE LIKED ME A LOT.

LAST TIME I SAW HIM WAS IN THE AMAZON. HE WAS SHOT UP PRETTY BADLY.

I PROMISED I'D COME BACK FOR HIM AND I DID.

THAT WAS WHEN HE SAID WHAT HE SAID.

I LOVE YOU, MARTHA.

STILL FLATLINE! TRY AGAIN!

I NEVER SAW WASSERSTEIN AGAIN.

THEY HAD ME BACK ON DUTY WITHIN THE WEEK SO I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO CHECK UP ON HIM AND RAGGYANN UNTIL A COUPLE OF MONTHS LATER.

IT WAS THE WORST DAY OF MY LIFE.

RAGGYANN AND WASSERSTEIN HAD BEEN SENT STATESIDE. TO CHICAGO. FOR OBSERVATION.

UP UNTIL THEN I HADN'T HEARD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO CHICAGO.

AND MY MOM.

FIFTEEN MILLION DEAD. INCLUDING WASSERSTEIN. AND RAGGYANN.

IT'S NO GOOD. WE'VE LOST HER. SHE'S GONE.

MY MOM...

...MY MOM WAS THE **BEST**. SHE WAS ALWAYS SO **SURE**. ALWAYS SO **CALM** AND **CLEAR**.

EVEN WHEN THE **RIOTS** BROKE OUT AND THE **FLOOR** SHOOK AND **PLASTER** FELL FROM THE CEILING AND THE AIR WAS FULL OF **SMOKE** AND THE **GUNSHOTS** WOULDN'T **STOP**...

...EVEN THEN, MY **MOM** STAYED **CALM**.

I KNOW YOU'RE **SCARED**, MARTHA. BUT **NOTHING'S** GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU.

YOU'RE GOING TO GROW UP **STRONG**. YOU'RE GOING TO BE **GOOD** FOR THIS WORLD. YOU'RE **SPECIAL**. YOU'RE **BETTER** THAN THIS PLACE.

WHEN THINGS GET **BAD** LIKE THIS, YOU JUST KEEP **TELLING** YOURSELF--

THIS WON'T KILL ME. I WON'T DIE HERE. THIS WON'T KILL ME.

THIS WON'T KILL ME.

I WON'T DIE HERE.

THIS WON'T KILL ME.

HOLD ON--WE'VE GOT A **HEARTBEAT**-- BLOOD PRESSURE'S **RISING**--

--THIS GIRL'S A **FIGHTER**!

TRIUMPH AFTER TRIUMPH IN THE BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF AMERICA!

VICTORIOUS PEACE FORCE TROOPS--TIRELESS, RELENTLESS, YET GENEROUS--BRING THE LIGHT OF DEMOCRACY BACK TO SAN ANTONIO--TO FORT WORTH--TO DALLAS!

AND THEY ARE MET BY CHEERING THRONGS TO WHOM THE STARS AND STRIPES MEAN THE REBIRTH OF HOPE AND PEACE AND ORDER!

PAX TV

PAX

TAKE AMERICA BACK, SHOUT THE THRONGS, THEIR VOICES RISING TO THE HEAVENS! AND THEIR CRIES ARE ANSWERED!

LISTEN CLOSELY NOW, AMERICANS, WHEREVER YOU FEEL THE YOKE OF SEPARATISM. LISTEN CLOSELY--THAT SOUND YOU HEAR, STILL DISTANT, PERHAPS, BUT BEAUTIFUL...

...THAT RINGING--IT IS THE LIBERTY BELL! CRACKED YET NEVER BROKEN!

GOD BLESS AMERICA! LET FREEDOM RING!

A FEW DAYS ALONG THEY SHIP ME NORTH. TO FORTRESS HEALTH, IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA--THE HEART OF GOD'S COUNTRY.

I GUESS THE TRUCE IS STILL HOLDING.

THEY'VE GOT ME ON LIFE SUPPORT UNTIL THEY CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH ME.

I GET VISITED BY ANOTHER GHOST.

NO. THIS IS *REAL*. I DON'T KNOW *HOW*, BUT THE *SURGEON GENERAL* IS *ALIVE*.

AND HE'S GOT *REASONS* NOT TO *LIKE* ME. I *KILLED* HIM, FOR INSTANCE. AT LEAST, I *THOUGHT* I DID.

I CAN'T *HEAR* WHAT HE'S *SAYING*. I CAN'T HEAR *ANYTHING*.

SPINE CRUSHED. NERVES SEVERED. BAD GIRL ANYWAY. IS NOT WORTH SPECIAL ATTENTION. WILL NOT GET SPECIAL ATTENTION.

MY SUPERIORS *DIS-AGREE*, SIR. LIEUTENANT *WASHINGTON* IS ONE OF OUR BEST KEPT *SECRETS*. SHE'S OFF THE CHARTS IN RESOURCEFULNESS, STEALTH, AND *COMBAT* ACUMEN--

-- ALL OF WHICH MAKES HER ONE OF OUR TOP *INFILTRATION* OPERATIVES. WE WERE SET TO DEPLOY HER AGAINST THE '*GHOSTS*'.

GHOSTS. SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR BOTH SIDES. FRUSTRATING.

WASHINGTON RECOVERY UNLIKELY. DAMAGE TOO GREAT. CRIPPLED FOR LIFE. USELESS.

YOU WERE ABLE TO *CLONE* THE *PRESIDENT* A NEW *BODY*, SIR.

HAD LONGFELLOW THEN. TRANS-PLANTED BRAIN. ONLY ONE GOOD ENOUGH. GHOSTS TOOK HIM. FRUSTRATING.

NO HOPE FOR WASHINGTON. BAD GIRL ANYWAY.

HOW IS HE *ALIVE*?

HOW IS HE *ALIVE*?

FRUSTRATING BUSINESS. NEED TO SLEEP.

YES, SIR.

SLEEP NOW. FRUSTRATING BUSINESS.

YES, SIR.

FOR A WHILE I JUST *FLOAT* AND TRY TO MOVE MY *TOES* BUT I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING. BELOW MY *NECK*.

SHUSHH

THEN THE *DOORS OPEN*. I DON'T *SEE* ANYBODY.

I DON'T *SEE* ANYBODY.

KLANK KLANK KLANK KLANK

WASSERSTEIN.

I'M BREAKING ALL THE RULES, COMING HERE, MARTHA. BUT RAGGYANN TOLD ME WHAT HAPPENED.

SHE BROKE THE RULES, TOO, LINKING WITH YOU LIKE SHE DID. BUT SHE LOVES YOU. AND SO DO I.

I WISH I COULD RIP YOU OUT OF THIS THING AND TAKE YOU WITH ME. BUT YOU'D DIE BEFORE YOU REACHED THE DOOR.

THESE IDIOTS CAN KEEP YOU ALIVE, AT LEAST.

THE REST IS UP TO MY FRIENDS AND I -- AND YOU.

BE STRONG, MARTHA. USE THAT WILL OF YOURS. HELP THE PROCESS.

WE WILL MEET AGAIN, MY LOVE.

FOR **DAYS**, I TELL MYSELF IT WAS JUST A **DREAM** OR SOMETHING. THAT I'VE GONE **CRAZY** FROM TOO MUCH **COMBAT**.

BUT I CAN TELL BY THE **LOOKS** ON THEIR **FACES** THAT WHAT I'M **FEELING** IS **TRUE**.

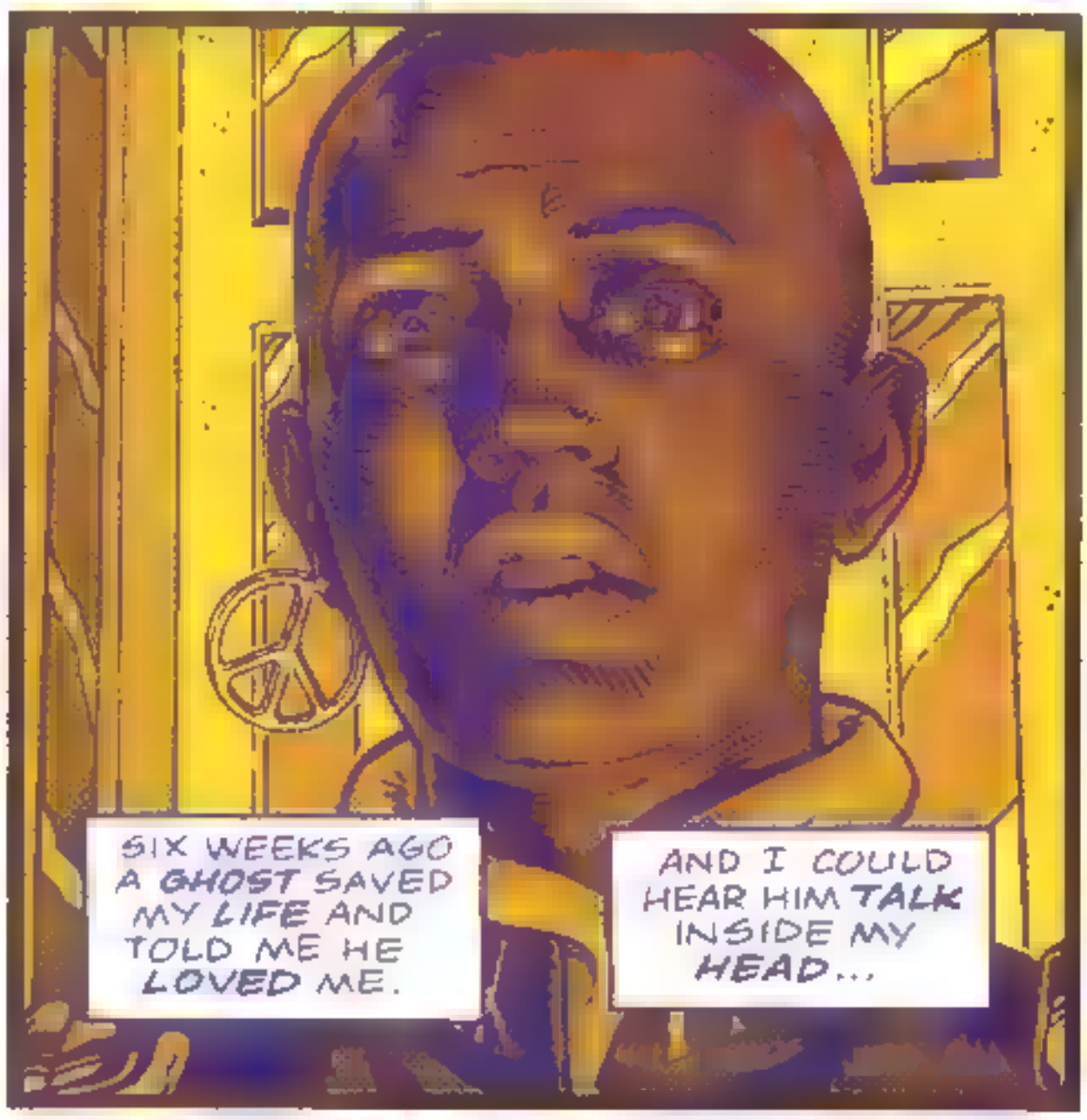
I CAN FEEL MY **ARMS** AND MY **FINGERS** AND MY **TOES**. I'M GOING TO BE ALL **RIGHT**.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND **HOW** ANY OF THIS **IS HAPPENING** OR WHO'S **DEAD** OR WHO'S **ALIVE**. THERE'S ONLY **ONE THING** I'M SURE OF, NOW.

I DO BELIEVE IN **GHOSTS**.

FRANK MILLER ★ DAVE GIBBONS

MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR



2: HARMONY

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD!

GOD IS NOT HAPPY WITH US! GOD HAS BEEN WATCHING AS WE SIN AND SIN AND SIN! AND THE DAY OF RETRIBUTION IS AT HAND!

DON'T LISTEN TO THOSE WHO SPEAK OF ENVIRONMENTAL ABUSE! OF OZONE LAYERS AND GLOBAL WARMING! THEY'RE MISSING THE WHOLE POINT! THEY'RE OUT OF THE LOOP! THEY HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE!

WE ARE BABEL! WE ARE SODOM AND GOMORRAH! WE SPURN OUR GOD! WE TURN OUR BACKS ON OUR GOD! AND HE'S HAD IT! HE'S REALLY HONKED OFF AT US!

HE IS WIPING THE SLATE CLEAN! THIS IS THE BIG ONE! APOCALYPSE! IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD!

YOU CANNOT *RUN* FROM THE LORD! YOU CANNOT *HIDE* FROM THE LORD! YOU CANNOT *DECEIVE* THE LORD!

HE WILL *DROWN* YOU! HE WILL TURN THE AIR TO *FIRE*! HE WILL *MELT* YOUR *SKIN* AND PLUCK YOUR EYES FROM THEIR *SOCKETS*!

THE *END* OF THE *WORLD*! *TORMENT* UPON *TORMENT*! *BILLIONS* CAST TO *HELL*! *THIS* IS THE FATE THAT AWAITS *HUMANITY*!

BUT YOU CAN *ESCAPE* THAT FATE! YOU CAN BE *SAVED*!

THERE IS ONLY *ONE HOPE* YOU HAVE! THERE IS ONLY *ONE WAY* TO SAVE YOUR *SOUL--ONE WAY* TO JOIN THE *RIGHTEOUS*! TO BE SWEPT TO THE *HEAVENS* FOR THE JOYS OF *LIFE ETERNAL*!

ALL IT WILL *TAKE* IS A SINGLE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONT-*RIBUTION*! VISA AND *MASTERCARD* ACCEPTED!

DIAL 1—800—RAPTURE!

FOR A WHILE I JUST WATCH THE WILD *LIGHTS* JUMP ALL OVER THE SKY. I'VE BEEN DOING THAT A *LOT* LATELY. IT'S WEIRD TO HAVE SO MUCH *TIME* ON MY HANDS.

PEOPLE SAY IT'S THE *POLLUTION* THAT MAKES ALL THOSE COLORS. BUT IT STILL LOOKS TO ME LIKE GOD'S GIVING US A GREAT SHOW, JUST TO REMIND US HE'S STILL THERE, NO MATTER HOW BAD WE ARE.

MY MIND WANDERS ALL AROUND, NOT CONCENTRATING MUCH ON ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR. I GUESS I DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY IS **UP**, THESE DAYS.

SIX WEEKS AGO A **GHOST** SAVED MY **LIFE** AND TOLD ME HE **LOVED** ME.

AND I COULD HEAR HIM **TALK** INSIDE MY **HEAD**...

Martha! Heads up!

Sorry to interrupt you, Martha, but they want you on level sixty. Just as soon as you can get there.

TELL THEM I'M ON MY WAY, COMPUTER.

Come on, Martha. Don't just call me "computer", call me **Chuck.** I'm your **buddy.** I'm **user-friendly.**

WHAT-EVER YOU SAY, CHUCK.

NO MORE BAD HABITS. NO MORE BAD HABITS.

INSIDE, THE AIR'S **ANTISEPTIC.** NO SMELL OF **TREES** OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT'S ALIVE.

IT LEAVES A **TASTE** ON MY TONGUE.

I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE.

AND I DON'T LIKE THE **VALKYRIE CLONES.** THEY'RE JUST PLAIN **MEAN.**

THIS WAY, WASHINGTON. GIVE US ANY **GRIEF** AND I'LL RIP YOUR **ARM** CLEAN OFF.

LET GO OF ME. IF THEY WERE GOING TO LET YOU KILL ME YOU WOULD'VE BY NOW.

NO, YOU'RE NOT GETTING **KILLED.** THE **SURGEON GENERAL** JUST WANTS TO **TALK.**

RIP THEM BOTH CLEAN OFF. I COULD. I'M STRONG ENOUGH.

AND YOU DESERVE IT.

HOOFF!

WHUKK

NO MORE TALKS!

THIS'LL TAKE THE FIGHT OUT OF YOU.

UHNN

FFT

THEN THINGS GO DARK AND NOTHING MATTERS.

SHE'S READY FOR YOU, SIR.

RIP HER ARMS CLEAN OFF. I COULD. I'M STRONG ENOUGH.

FOR A WHILE, I JUST SWIM IN SOUP. THEN I COME OUT OF IT AND THE SMELLS ARE WORSE. LIKE AT A DENTIST'S.

I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE.

AND I DON'T LIKE THE SURGEON GENERAL AND HE DOESN'T LIKE ME, EITHER.

IMPRESSIVE RECOVERY, WASHINGTON. SUSPICIOUS RECOVERY. IMPOSSIBLE.

BAD GIRL. BAD ATTITUDE. SUSPICIOUS RECOVERY. BEARS INVESTIG-ATION.

YOU'VE CRAWLED INSIDE MY BRAIN EVERY DAY FOR SIX WEEKS. YOU HAVEN'T FOUND ANY-THING.

YOU HAVE DISCIPLINED MIND. CLEVER. SPECIAL METHODS REQUIRED. SIMPLER METHODS. NO PROBE THIS TIME. USE PAIN THIS TIME. NO BLOOD. NO MARKS. ELECTRICITY.

ALL RIGHT TO SCREAM.

SIR, YOU ARE *BREAKING* OUR *AGREEMENT*! I *DEMAND* THAT YOU RELEASE MY OFFICER *IMMEDIATELY*!

NO!

HENNF. FRUST-RATING.

RELEASE HER.

SNAP

YOU *BASTARD*!

SNAP

WASHINGTON!

HURRFF.

BAD LANGUAGE. BAD GIRL. BAD TEMPER. SELF-DEFENSE JUSTIFIED.

SNAK

SNAK

RIP HER *ARMS* OFF. YOU *COULD*. YOU'RE *STRONG* ENOUGH.

AND SHE *DESERVES* IT.

WASH-INGTON! FRONT AND CENTER! NOW!

THAT'S AN ORDER, WASHING-TON!

...YES, SIR.

FILTHY. BAD ATTITUDE. GROUNDS FOR COURT MARTIAL.

TOO MANY WOMEN IN SITUATION. GENDER IMBALANCE. DISTURBING.

YES, SIR.

YES, SIR.

I'M DOING MY BEST TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE ALIVE, WASHINGTON. DON'T MAKE MY JOB ANY HARDER THAN IT ALREADY IS.

YES, SIR. I'M VERY SORRY, SIR.

I KNOW SOMETHING BIG IS COMING BY THE WAY THE CAPTAIN SETS HER JAW BEFORE SHE TALKS TO ME.

LIEUTENANT WASHINGTON, YOU UNDERSTAND THAT IF YOU REPEAT ANYTHING I'M ABOUT TO SAY TO ANYONE UNDER ANY CIRCUM-STANCES, YOUR SUMMARY EXECUTION WILL BE ORDERED.

IF YOU TALK, YOU DIE.

YES, SIR.

SLOW DEATH. VERY PAIN-FUL.

WE'VE HAD YOU COMBAT-TESTING ***WEAPONS PROTO-TYPES*** FOR THE BETTER PART OF A ***YEAR***, LIEUTENANT. SURELY YOU'VE ***NOTICED*** THAT ALMOST NONE OF THEM ***WORK***.

YES, SIR!

NOTHING WORKS. BRAIN DRAIN. VERY BAD.

WE'RE LOSING OUR **BEST** AND **BRIGHTEST**, WASHINGTON. OUR FINEST **MINDS**. IN **WEAPONS DESIGN**. IN **GENETICS**. IN **STRATEGY**. IN **MEDIA CONTROL**.

THEY'RE **DISAPPEARING** ON US AND WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY'RE **GOING**.

GHOSTS GHOSTS TAKING THEM CLEVER ENEMY. UN-PREDICTABLE

GHOSTS?

GHOSTS. MY STOMACH TIGHTENS INTO A LITTLE BALL.

I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH THEY KNOW AND I DON'T KNOW MUCH OF ANYTHING MYSELF.

BUT IF I SCREW UP I'M DEAD. THEY'LL KILL ME.

YES, WASHINGTON. GHOSTS. YOU MUST'VE HEARD THE **STORIES**. IN ALL YOUR TIME IN THE **FIELD**.

IT'S ALL THE GRUNTS WANT TO **TALK** ABOUT, THESE DAYS.

I'VE HEARD A THING OR TWO, SIR. IT SOUNDED LIKE **COMBAT FATIGUE** TO ME.

I MEAN, EVERYBODY **KNOWS** THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS **GHOSTS**.

IN THIS CASE, CONSIDER "GHOSTS" A **EUPHEMISM**.

I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDER-STAND WHAT THAT WORD MEANS, SIR.

STUPID GIRL. BADLY EDUCATED.

LET'S JUST CALL "GHOSTS" A **CODE NAME**, WASHINGTON. FOR AN UNSEEN **ENEMY** WHO IS **POSITIONING** HIMSELF TO DESTROY ANY HOPE OF A REUNITED AMERICA.

WE SUSPECT A FOREIGN POWER IS BEHIND IT-- MOST LIKELY THE **GERMANS**.

GERMANS. VERY ORGANIZED.

WE BELIEVE THIS IS NOTHING SHORT OF AN EFFORT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR CURRENT **INSTABILITY**--TO **AGGRAVATE** THE CHAOS UNTIL OUR INFRASTRUCTURE ENTIRELY **COL-LAPSES**--

-- AS A PRELUDE TO **INVASION**.

Ten minutes to contact. Commencing deceleration. All systems secure. Hailing Harmony complex.

"HARMONY"?

Alert. Harmony is reading us as **hostile**, Captain. They are **ignoring** our hail.

HARMONY, THIS IS SHUTTLE **SEVEN-OH-SIX**-- WE'RE CAUGHT IN YOUR **DEFENSE NET**-- **RESPOND**, DAMN IT!

PLEASE STAND BY

COMPUTER -- **EVASIVE SEQUENCE ABEL! NOW!**

Evasive sequence Abel engaged.

PAY
PAY
PAY

You are showing commendable resolve and calm in the face of crisis, Martha. I'm very impressed.
SHUT UP, CHUCK.
COMPUTER FIRE RETROS! ACTIVATE DISTRESS BEACON!
Distress beacon activated, Lieutenant. **Alert. Complete loss of motive power. Retro systems failure.**

IT'S JUST LIKE THE CAPTAIN *SAID*. NOTHING WORKS RIGHT ANYMORE.

NOT "*HARMONY*" --WHATEVER *THAT* IS -- AND NOT THIS *SHUTTLE*.

PREPARE FOR *PASSENGER EJECTION*. ON MY *ORDER*.

Ready for passenger ejection, Lieutenant. On your order.

BUCKLE UP FOR *SAFETY* GIRLS.

COMPUTER! EJECT! NOW!

THEN THERE'S A *SHUDDER* AND A *BLAST* UNDER THE SEAT AND THE AIR'S RIPPED RIGHT OUT OF MY LUNGS AND IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO HOLD ONTO THE CAPTAIN.

THE SHUTTLE GIVES A MISSILE SHRIEK ON ITS WAY DOWN. ITS A SOUND I'M USED TO.

JUST LIKE I'M USED TO THE BOMB BLAST AS THE ENGINE GOES UP AND THE MOUNTAIN SHAKES. IT'S NOT SO MUCH A SOUND AS A PUNCH IN THE CHEST.

THEN THINGS GO QUIET AND THE *BIRDS* SCATTER, CAWING, COMPLAINING.

IT'S ALWAYS STRANGE TO HEAR BIRDS.

GHOSTS WALK AMONG US!

GHOSTS! STALKING OUR LAND! INVISIBLE! INDESTRUCTIBLE! BULLETS CAN'T STOP THEM! BOMBS CAN'T HURT THEM! THEY STRIKE WITHOUT WARNING! THEY ARE EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE! AND THEY DON'T PLAY FAVORITES!

YOU'VE HEARD THE RUMORS! YOU'VE HEARD THE STORIES; TOLD BY BROKEN MEN -- SHATTERED MEN -- BRAVE SOLDIERS WHO HAVE STARED INTO THE PITS OF HELL!

AND THERE IS A *DOORWAY* TO *HELL*-- IN THE VERY *HEART* OF AMERICA! SOME CALL IT THE *RADIOACTIVE ZONE*! SOME SAY THAT THIS CHURNING, SPEWING, RAGING *MASS* IS THE RESULT OF THE GREATEST *NUCLEAR ACCIDENT* IN *HISTORY*!

THAT IS A LIE!

SOME SAY THAT THE TWISTED, CANNIBALISTIC, ROCK-MUSIC-LOVING *MONSTERS* THAT STALK ITS RUBBLE-STREWN LANDS ARE *RADIOACTIVE MUTANTS!* THAT IS A LIE!

SATAN HAS HIS ARMY! IT OOZES LIKE PUS FROM THE BLAZING SORE THAT IS THE DEVIL'S GATEWAY! THESE BLOATED, SEX-CRAZED, SO-CALLED "MUTANTS" ARE NOTHING LESS THAN SATAN'S GROUND TROOPS! AND THEY ARE AT WAR FOR THE HUMAN SOUL!

BUT AN *ARMY* IS MADE UP OF MORE THAN *GROUND TROOPS!*

THE *GHOSTS* ARE NOT *FOREIGN TERRORISTS!* THE *GHOSTS* ARE NOT THE *WAR DEAD* BACK FOR *REVENGE!* THE *GHOSTS* ARE *SATAN'S ELITE!* HIS DEADLIEST, MOST CLEVER, MOST POWERFUL *AGENTS OF CHAOS!*

AND THEY'RE COMING FOR *YOU!*

WITHIN AN *HOUR*, IT'S *SNOWING*, WHICH IS CRAZY, THIS TIME OF YEAR.

THE *RESCUE TEAM* KEEPS LOSING OUR *SIGNAL*. WE'RE LUCKY WE DON'T *FREEZE* TO DEATH BEFORE THEY FIND US.

WHERE THE HELL HAVE *YOU* BEEN, SOLDIER?

IT WASN'T OUR *FAULT.*

THE *TRANSPORT* BREAKS A *TREAD* A FEW MILES OUT. NOBODY IN THE CREW KNOWS HOW TO FIX IT. ME AND THE CLONES JURY-RIG THE THING JUST ENOUGH TO GET US TO HARMONY.

THINGS NEVER USED TO BREAK DOWN THIS OFTEN.

BEFORE LONG, *SNOW* GIVES WAY TO HURRICANE *WIND*. THIS IS WEIRDER THAN ANY WEATHER I'VE EVER *SEEN*.

IT ISN'T NATURAL. I SAY SO TO THE CAPTAIN AND SHE MEETS MY EYES.

NO, WASHINGTON. IT ISN'T NATURAL. IT'S *HARMONY*.

THE *TURBOLIFT* WORKS AFTER FOUR TRIES AND TWO HOURS OF THE REPAIR TEAM ARGUING WITH EACH OTHER.

"*CAN'T BE HELPED*" SAYS ONE OF THEM, ABOUT THE DELAY. HE'S LOOKING LIKE HE'S ENJOYING HIMSELF WHEN HE SAYS IT.

HE EVEN *WINKS* AT ME LIKE WE'RE SHARING SOME KIND OF DIRTY *SECRET*.

SOMETIMES I DON'T UNDERSTAND PEOPLE.

THEN IT'S LIKE A BOMB GOES OFF UNDER US AND WE FLY IN A STRAIGHT SHOT UP INTO HARMONY.

HARMONY.

THE CAPTAIN EXPLAINS THAT HARMONY IS SO IMPORTANT THAT THE **GHOSTS** ARE CERTAIN TO STRIKE HERE. "WITHOUT HARMONY," SHE SAYS, "THE WAR WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PROSECUTE"

HARMONY. A **TETHERED SATELLITE** -- THE PRODUCT OF TENS OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND ONE MAN'S **GENIUS**.

HE WAS PROFESSOR **DAUMIER**, WHO PEOPLE COMPARED TO **EINSTEIN**. HE CREATED A **BREAKTHROUGH** IN ELECTROMAGNETIC **THEORY** THAT HARNESSED **INCREDIBLE** POWER

ENOUGH POWER TO CHANGE THE *WEATHER*. TO QUIET *STORMS* AND CHANGE *SEASONS*.

THEN, ON THE DAY OF HIS *TRIUMPH*--HE *VANISHED*. NOBODY KNOWS *WHERE*.

AND HE TOOK ALL HIS *KNOWLEDGE* OF HARMONY *WITH* HIM. EVER *SINCE* THEY'VE BEEN *SCRAMBLING* TO MAKE HARMONY *WORK*.

POOM

Alert. Power surge. Hull breach. Radical decompression of turbolift shaft. All hands. Red alert.

HOLD ON!

Oh, Martha. Oh, dear. This is **bad**.

AAAA

AAAA

THERE'S NO WAY TO *BREATHE*. NO CHANCE TO *THINK*. I BARELY GET THE CAPTAIN'S *FINGERS*. I'M GOING TO *LOSE* HER.

I'M GOING T *LOSE*

I'M TO *LOSE* HER. AND SHE *KNOWS* IT.

TALK TO *COOGAN*. HE'S THE ONLY ONE WORTH A *DAMN* UP THERE!

JUST *HOLD ON! HOLD ON!*

IT'S TOO LATE, WASHINGTON. THERE'S NO CHANCE.

BE STRONG, MARTHA.

I'm really sorry about what happened to the captain, Martha. Would you like to talk about it?

Martha?

MOVE IT YOU IDIOTS-- WE'RE LOSING POWER ALL OVER THE SYSTEM!

WE'RE TRYING.

THIS STUFF'S HEAVY.

QUICKLY NOW-- THE COUPLINGS. THE OXYGEN LEVELS ARE FIVE MINUTES FROM FAILURE ON LEVEL NINE. NO MISTAKES.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO JUMP ALL OVER US.

WE'RE DOING THE BEST WE CAN.

NOTHING'S EVER GOOD ENOUGH.

WE CAN'T ALL BE GENIUS-ES.

NO.. THAT ONE'S LIVE --YOU IDIOTS..

YOU THERE -- RE-ROUTE THAT FEED LINE-- AND WATCH THE SURGE CONTROL.

YES, SIR. SURGE CONTROL SECURED. RE-ROUTING FEED LINE.

HE SHOOTS ME A GLANCE LIKE I'M FROM ANOTHER PLANET. THEN HE GIVES ME A NOD AND GETS BACK TO BOSSING ME AROUND.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD WITH COMPUTERS. IT DOESN'T TAKE ME LONG TO CATCH ON.

PRETTY SOON EVERYTHING'S HUMMING ALONG AND WE'RE DOWN TO THE FINAL SYSTEMS CHECK.

IT'S NOT HARD TO FIGURE OUT WHY THE CAPTAIN TOLD ME TO FIND THIS GUY.

HARMONY LOST ITS BRAINS WHEN IT LOST PROFESSOR DAUMIER. BUT IT'S STILL GOT ITS GUTS. ITS CHIEF ENGINEER. COOGAN.

SABOTAGE? NAH, THIS WASN'T SABOTAGE. PARTS JUST WEAR OUT, IS ALL-- AND INSTEAD OF REPLACEMENTS ALL YOU GET IS PROMISES.

IF THE GHOSTS EVER COME AFTER HARMONY, WE'LL KNOW IT -- AND THAT'S FOR DAMN SURE.

I'VE HEARD A LOT OF TALK ABOUT THE GHOSTS. IN THE FIELD. DID THEY TAKE THE PROFESSOR?

SOME-TIMES I WONDER. BUT NO, I DON'T THINK IT TOOK ANYBODY BUT HIMSELF TO MAKE HIM PULL OUT. HIM-SELF AND HIS CONSCIENCE.

COME ON KID. I GOT A BOTTLE STASHED DOWNSIDE. WE'LL TALK THERE

IT'S FUNNY HOW YOU CAN TAKE A LIKING TO SOMEBODY ALMOST AS SOON AS YOU MEET THEM. ESPECIALLY IF YOU WORK WITH THEM AND SEE THAT THEY'RE REALLY GOOD AT WORKING. THAT'S THE WAY IT IS WITH ME AND COOGAN.

I TELL HIM I'M NEW WITH THE SECURITY TEAM. HE JUST SHRUGS, NOT CARING WHETHER I'M LYING OR NOT.

HE'S NOT THE KIND OF MAN I LIKE TO LIE TO. BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE.

HE LEADS ME THROUGH SOME TUNNELS TO A DUSTY OLD **CARGO BAY**. "IT BROKE DOWN AND THEY'VE NEVER GOTTEN AROUND TO TELLING ME TO FIX IT," HE SAYS. "AND I'LL BE DAMNED IF I'M GOING TO REMIND THEM ABOUT IT. IT'S THE ONLY PLACE AROUND HERE WHERE YOU CAN GET SOME PRIVACY."

THEN WE GET TO TALKING ABOUT PROFESSOR DAUMIER AND COOGAN'S FACE SEEMS SAD, AND OLDER THAN IT WAS.

12

CARGO

THEY SAY THE PROFESSOR WAS A **GENIUS**.

YEAH, BUT THAT DOESN'T COVER IT. NOT THE WAY PEOPLE THROW THAT WORD AROUND THESE DAYS.

COMPARED TO ANYONE ELSE, DAUMIER WAS A **MAGICIAN**.

BUT HE WASN'T ANY **POLITICIAN**, THAT'S FOR SURE. AND HE HAD A BAD HABIT OF TAKING PEOPLE AT THEIR **WORD**.

THE BASTARDS. HE NEVER HAD A CHANCE AGAINST THEM.

HE GOT **HARMONY** BUILT, DIDN'T HE?

THEY *SUCKERED* HIM. THEY MADE HIM ALL THE *PROMISES* IN THE *WORLD*--NOT *MONEY*, I MEAN. THEY OFFERED HIM PLENTY OF MONEY, BUT HE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THAT. HE NEVER CARED ABOUT MONEY...

IT WAS HIS *DREAM*. TO RECLAIM THE *DESERTS*. CAN YOU *IMAGINE* WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE IF THE MIDWEST STARTED *FARMING* AGAIN?

AND THEY LED HIM ON AND ON AND ON. SAYING WHATEVER HE WANTED TO HEAR. EVEN PUTTING IT IN WRITING, AS IF A CONTRACT WITH THE GOVERNMENT WAS WORTH A DAMN.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THEY *BUILT* IT. THEY *GAVE* HIM WHAT HE *WANTED*.

SURE, THEY *BUILT* IT--THEN THEY TURNED AROUND AND USED IT TO DO THINGS THAT...

WHAT THE HELL. NO--IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. *THOSE DOORS CAN'T OPEN.*

FIND COVER! NOW!

THOSE DOORS CAN'T OPEN! THIS IS IMPOSS-IBLE!

FIND COVER! IT'S THEM! IT'S THE GHOSTS!

THOSE DOORS CAN'T OPEN!

WASSER-STEIN! IS IT YOU? IS IT?

WASS--

AAAAA

GNAAA

AAAA

CHUCK. GET A FIX ON THEM. ANYTHING.

I'm reading an **ion emission** moving away from Harmony, Martha. I've got a pretty good fix on it. And I'm so glad you've found some use for me.

LOCK ON ION EMISSION, CHUCK. WE'RE GOING TO BAG US A *GHOST*.

But **Martha**-- the **doors** are almost **closed** --it's **suicide**--

LOCK ON ION EMISSION, DAMN YOU! I'LL DO THE REST!

Yes, Martha.

THERE'S NO *WAY* I'M LETTING THEM GET *AWAY*. I'M *DEAD* IF I DO.

AND THEY KILLED *COOGAN*

--AND I *LIKED* COOGAN--

--AND I'M *SICK* OF *LOSING* PEOPLE I *LIKE*.

TARGET *ION EMISSION* AND *FIRE*!

Yes, Martha.

PROOM PROOM

A **direct hit**, Martha. You sure know what you're **doing.**

Oh, dear. It seems you hit a **force field**, Martha. I'm reading **no damage** to the craft.

POOM POOM

FORCE FIELD?! THERE'S NO SUCH THING!

FOR JUST A *SECOND* I THINK I *SEE* IT.

IT'S LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF SOME DUMB OLD *MOVIE*. NOBODY MAKES ANYTHING *SIMPLE* ANYMORE.

THEN CHUCK PIPES UP AND I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER THAT NOBODY MAKES ANYTHING THAT *WORKS* ANY-MORE, EITHER.

Martha, I'm reading a **dangerous** power overload in the right aft **engine**. It really doesn't look good at all.

OH, NO!

NOTHING WORKS.

DAMN IT!

FRANK MILLER ★ DAVE GIBBONS

MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR

3: THE VALLEY OF DEATH

NOTHING **WORKS**.

AND IT'S ALL THE **GHOSTS'** FAULT.

"**GHOSTS**" IS A *CODE NAME* THAT STARTED AS A **NICKNAME** MADE UP BY SCARED **SOLDIERS**. THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE *INVISIBLE*. THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO DO **ANYTHING**.

SOME PEOPLE SAY THEY'RE THE **WAR DEAD** BACK FOR **REVENGE**. ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT THEY **STEAL** PEOPLE. **SCIENTISTS**. **ENGINEERS**. PEOPLE WHO MAKE THINGS **WORK**.

AND BECAUSE OF EVERYTHING THEY **SCREW UP**--THEY **KILL** PEOPLE. LIKE MY **CAPTAIN**. AND A **FRIEND** I JUST MADE NAMED **COOGAN**.

AND HERE I AM HOT ON THEIR **TRAIL** AND MY **SKY SLED** BLOWS AN **ENGINE**.

HOLD ON TO THAT **SIGNAL**, CHUCK. WE'RE NOT FINISHED **YET**.

Yes, Martha.

Martha -- Harmony's ignoring my **hail**. I'm reading **activation** of their **defense net**.

NOTHING **WORKS**.

HARMONY. THEY **BUILT** IT TO **CONTROL** THE **WEATHER** -- AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT THEY **SAY**--

-- BUT HARMONY CAN'T EVEN CONTROL **ITSELF**.

SHUT DOWN THE **ENGINE**. ALL POWER TO THE **GYROS**. AND KEEP HOLD OF THAT **SIGNAL**. I'M TAKING US **IN**.

That's very risky, Martha. As much confidence as I have in your resourcefulness, attempting a landing under these conditions is hardly advisable.

YOU SHUT THE HELL UP, CHUCK. WE'RE GOING IN.

Yes, Martha

NOW WHAT?

THIS JOB **REALLY** SUCKS!

WHAT A TUMBLE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I'M FINE. THERE'S NO TIME. I NEED A PLANE. NOW.

I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T ALLOW THAT UNTIL WE RECEIVE AUTHORIZ-ATION-- OOF!

PAX

THERE'S NO TIME!

CHUCK! HOLD THAT SIGNAL!

Yes, Martha. It's heading **due Northeast**. But it's getting **faint**.

FREEZE --I SAID FREEZE--

PAX

BLAM-M

KRAK

Interfacing... Martha, some of the **software** in the **guidance** system is **six months** overdue for **maintenance**. I wouldn't trust it.

BLAM

BLAMM

BRAKABRAKA

BYPASS IT. FULL SPEED. NOW.

Yes, Martha. Oh, dear. I'm reading some pretty shaky **wiring** in **control**. And there's a hairline **fracture** in the **fuel line**.

This craft is in questionable repair. There's no two ways about it.

WE'LL RISK IT. FIND ME THAT SHIP, CHUCK!

Sensors locked. They're changing course. Heading south-southwest -- Oh, dear, Martha. They're dead on course for the **radioactive zone**!

KICK ON THE AFTER BURNERS. GET US WITH-IN FIRING RANGE.

We're **gaining** on them, Martha. They're slowing **down**. They're in **descent**... and they're still dead on course for the **radioactive zone**. It's **suicide**.

KABOOOM

LOCK WEAPONS AND GET US WITHIN RANGE. WE'LL ONLY GET ONE SHOT AT THEM.

But they've got a **force field**, Martha.

WE'LL *TEST* IT. THEY MAY BE *GHOSTS*... BUT THEY AREN'T *GODS*. HIT THEM WITH EVERY-THING WE'VE GOT.

Yes, Martha. I just hope we can ride the **shock wave**...

THE *SHOCK WAVE*. IT PRACTICALLY YANKS MY *BRAIN* OUT OF MY *HEAD*.

IF I *PASS OUT* WE'RE *DEAD*.

Direct hit. We've kicked it off course. I'm reading a **massive** power loss on their ship --

-- and I'm sorry to say the same about **ours**.

EMER-GENCY POWER! FEED THOSE GYROS, CHUCK!

Emergency power engaged. Gyros functioning. But that **fuel line** is **shot**, Martha. We have to **land**.

SOON. STAY LOCKED ON THE TARGET. WE'RE MOVING IN FOR THE KILL.

All of their power fields are down, Martha. This really isn't necessary.

THEY'RE FULL OF TRICKS. I'M NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES.

FULL OF TRICKS.

VREEE

THAT MUCH I'M RIGHT ABOUT, ANY-WAY.

BRAKABRAKABRAKABRAKA

VRRT

WHAT WAS THAT? WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S WITH THESE READINGS?

ANSWER ME, CHUCK!

... I don't know, Martha. All of a sudden I'm really confused.

I don't know if I could tell you which way is up, just now.

GIVE ME MANUAL CONTROL, CHUCK. I'M TAKING US DOWN.

If you say so, Martha. I really have no idea what's come over me.

KOOM

CHUCK SOUNDS LIKE HE'S ON DRUGS AND THE GUIDANCE SYSTEM THINKS WE'VE LANDED.

THEN THE RATTLING STARTS AND THINGS GET REALLY STRANGE.

PAX

Hi. I'm **Chuck**. I'm your **friend**. I'm **user friendly**.

I'M NOT GOING TO BLOW IT. NOT WHEN I'M THIS CLOSE.

THE WRECKAGE OF THAT FLYING SAUCER SHOULD TELL THE WHOLE STORY ABOUT THE GHOSTS.

AND HOW THEY KEEP DOING THINGS THAT ARE JUST PLAIN DAMN IMPOSSIBLE.

I HAVE TO GET THROUGH THIS.

I HAVE TO.

... oh, Martha. This is really bad. I'm all **loopy**.

Good morning. It's a beautiful morning, too. Just feel that sun. Just breathe that air.

SHUT UP, CHUCK.

HUNFF

CHUCK. ARE YOU STILL SCRAMBLED?

Checking system... It's the most amazing thing. Martha–

– but suddenly I'm right as **rain**. Efficiency 100%! And boy, I've got to tell you that was one **fine** landing. Not many people could have performed so well under such stressful circumstances.

If you don't mind my saying it, I'm darn **proud** to be your personal communications/ navigational/ data-processing unit. Proud as **punch**.

HAVE YOU STILL GOT THEIR SIGNAL?

You **bet** I do! They're only **four miles** from here. Golly, it's great to be **functional** again!

WHERE ARE WE? WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

IT'S WINDY AND IT'S HOT. I'VE NEVER BEEN TO ANY PLACE *LIKE* THIS.

ANSWER ME, CHUCK.

... that's just it, Martha. I've **checked** and **cross-checked** and there's **nothing wrong** with my **software.** I'd **know** it if there were.

My **mapping systems** are **intact**. Good as **new**. They can't be **wrong** -- but they can't be **right**, either!

They say we're a few miles outside the **perimeter** of the **radioactive zone**, in **Oklahoma City**. Population **twelve million**.

THAT'S CRAZY. THIS LOOKS LIKE THE *MOON*.

IT'S THE *END* OF THE *WORLD!*

THE END OF THE WORLD!

ONCE THERE WERE SMILING *CHILDREN*! ONCE THERE WERE SHINING *STRIP MALLS*! ONCE THERE WERE *WOMEN* WHO *COOKED* AND *SEWED*! ONCE THERE WERE *MEN* WHO *WORKED* AND *PRAYED* AND *HUNTED* AND *WATCHED MY SHOW*!

BUT *NO MORE*! *NO MORE*!

He doesn't seem **armed**, Martha.

ONCE THERE WERE GLEAMING TOWERS! ONCE THERE WAS A CITY OF LIFE AND HOPE AND VISA AND MASTER-CARD AND STREAMING SUNLIGHT!

TWELVE MILLION LIVING, BREATHING SOULS AND A LOT OF THEM WERE CHURCH-GOERS! A WHOLE LOT OF THEM!

BUT ALL THAT IS GONE! GONE! GONE!

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

A GLEAMING CITY! TWELVE MILLION CHRISTIAN SOULS! MY TV STATION! MY TOLL-FREE NUMBER! GONE! GONE! GONE!

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD!

WHAT HAPPENED?

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD!

SMEK

EVEN THAT SWEET YOUNG GIRL WHO RAN OUR PHONES! CRUSHED! HER BONES SNAPPED LIKE TWIGS. THOSE PERFECT LITTLE HOOTERS OF HERS LOST FOR ALL TIME! GONE! GONE! GONE!

WHAT HAPPENED?

SATAN HAPPENED! SATAN'S SPAWN! SATAN'S ARMY COME TO EARTH! SATAN'S ARMY! PUKED UP FROM THE CORE OF THE RADIOACTIVE ZONE! SATAN'S SPAWN! THE GHOSTS!

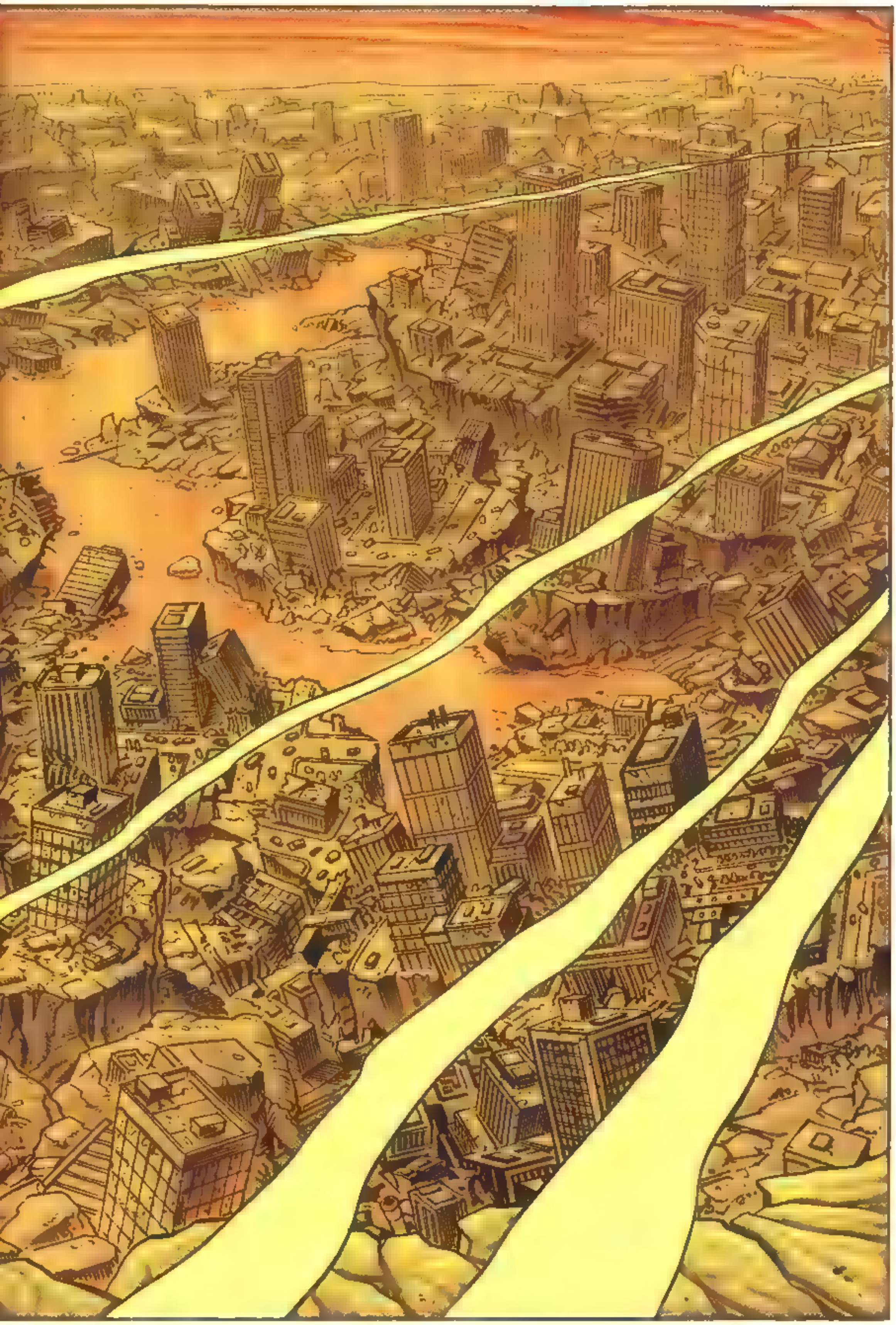
THE EARTH HEAVED! THE TOWERS FELL! THE CHILDREN SCREAMED! THE PEOPLE WAILED AND GNASHED THEIR TEETH! I LOST MY TV SIGNAL!

IT WAS HELL COME TO EARTH!

ARMA-GEDDON! THE BIG ONE! LOOK, MY DUSKY FRIEND! LOOK! OPEN YOUR EYES THAT YOU MAY SEE!

IT IS THE VALLEY OF DEATH!

THE
VALLEY
OF DEATH!



I WANT TO THROW UP BUT EVEN THAT SEEMS SMALL AND STUPID. I DON'T FAINT BUT I WISH I DID. I WISH I COULD WIPE THE SIGHT AWAY BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER BE ABLE TO

THE VALLEY OF DEATH.

AND THAT *CRAZY MAN* KEEPS *SCREAMING* THAT THE *GHOSTS* DID THIS.

IF THEY *DID*, THIS IS *BIGGER* THAN LOSING MY *CAPTAIN* OR ANY *FRIEND* I EVER HAD. AS AN *OFFICER* --OR EVEN JUST AS A *PERSON*-- YOU CAN'T *SEE* SOMETHING LIKE THIS AND JUST WALK *AWAY*.

I HAVE TO *FIND* THE GHOSTS. OR DIE TRYING.

WHOEVER *MADE* THAT THING KNEW WHAT THEY WERE *DOING*.

ONCE I PULL A *CORPSE* OUT OF IT I'VE GOT A *CAR*. IT'S A RICKETY OLD *ANTIQUE* FROM THIRTY YEARS BEFORE I WAS *BORN* BUT IT *RUNS* AND THE *GAS TANK* IS FULL.

IT GETS ME TO THE *GHOST SHIP*. *CHUCK'S* JUST AS SURPRISED AS I AM TO SEE THAT THE SHIP'S *INTACT*.

THE *INSIDE* IS ANOTHER SURPRISE FOR BOTH OF US. CHUCK ALMOST BLOWS HIS *CIRCUITS* TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT. IT'S LIKE SOMETHING FROM OUTER SPACE.

THEN A *VOICE* TELLS US WE HAVE EIGHT SECONDS TO *CLEAR OUT* OF THERE.

IT'S A VERY *POLITE* VOICE.

THEY PROBABLY WANTED TO *RETRIEVE* THE SHIP. THEY PROBABLY THOUGHT I WOULDN'T *FOLLOW*. BUT THEY DIDN'T TAKE THE *CHANCE*. THEY *RIGGED* IT IN CASE I *DID* FOLLOW.

BUT I'LL BE DAMNED IF I LET THEM.

I GUESS THEY WANT TO KEEP THEIR *SECRETS*.

THE TRACKS INDICATE SOMEBODY PICKED THEM UP --AND WHATEVER THEY DROVE, IT WAS HEAVY. WHICH PROBABLY MEANS IT WAS SLOW.

THEY CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR...

We've passed the **perimeter**, Martha. We're in the **radioactive zone**. That gives you **six hours** before the poisoning is **permanent**.

You'll die, Martha. This place will kill you.

I UNDERSTAND, CHUCK. UPDATE CENTRAL ON OUR MISSION STATUS. AND IF THEY CALL BACK -- GO DEAF.

Your **courage** is **commendable**, Martha. But **Pax regulations** specifically **exempt** you from any duty in the **zone** without proper **protection**. In fact, any such action is plainly **prohibited**.

Even if you **survive** -- you could be up on **charges** for this.

I'M NOT LETTING THOSE BASTARDS GET AWAY!

THE RADIOACTIVE ZONE.

TO TAKE MY MIND OFF WHERE I AM I TURN ON THE RADIO. IT TAKES FOREVER TO FIND A STATION AND THE ONLY ONE THAT'S OUT THERE IS PLAYING A FUND RAISER SO I TURN IT OFF.

THE SKY GOES DARK AND NOT BECAUSE IT'S NIGHT. IT'S THE CLOUDS. THE DEATH CLOUDS.

THEY SAY THE CLOSER YOU GET TO THE CORE THE REDDER EVERYTHING GETS. I GUESS I'LL FIND OUT IF THAT'S TRUE.

FIVE MORE HOURS IN THE ZONE AND I'LL BE POISONED FOR GOOD. EVEN THE BATHS WON'T HELP.

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO BE VERY LUCKY TO GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE.

BOOM

MUTANTS!

THE THINGS I'VE HEARD ABOUT *THESE* GUYS MADE MY *SKIN* CRAWL.

I'M *REALLY* SCREWED.

THEY'VE GOT ME OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED. I CAN'T WIN.

WHEN I WAS A *KID* A BUNCH OF *BULLIES* CORNERED ME IN THE *PLAY-GROUND* BECAUSE I WAS *SMALL*.

KRAK

I WENT AFTER THE *BIGGEST* BULLY. I THOUGHT I COULD *SCARE* THEM BY HITTING *FIRST*.

IT DIDN'T *WORK*. THEY BEAT THE *CRAP* OUT OF ME.

I TRY IT AGAIN *ANYWAY*.

BITCHIN!

TRULY BITCHIN!

WICKED BITCHIN!

WICKED DECENT BITCHIN!

THIS TIME IT *WORKS*.

I GUESS THESE MUTANTS AREN'T *BULLIES*.

ALL OF A SUDDEN THEY'RE PULLING OUT CANS OF *BEER* AND PLAYING *MUSIC* SO LOUD I CAN FEEL THE BEAT IN MY *CHEST*.

I GUESS THE MUTANTS DON'T NEED MUCH OF AN EXCUSE TO THROW A *PARTY*.

SINCE THEY ONLY LIVE FOR SIX MONTHS, YOU CAN'T BLAME THEM FOR HAVING ALL THE FUN THEY CAN.

I STICK AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO BE POLITE. THEN I CONVINCE ONE OF THEM TO TRADE IN HIS *MOTORCYCLE* FOR *CHUCK* AND MY *JACKET*.

THE MUTANT'S GOT THREE ARMS, BUT I GUESS HE'LL FIGURE OUT SOME WAY TO FIT HIMSELF INTO IT.

I guess this is good-bye, Martha. You should have them in sight just past the next hill. They're headed straight for the core.

You have three hours left, Martha. If you turn back right now--at full speed, you have a chance. Your last chance. It's just a thought, Martha.

NO. THERE'S NO GOING BACK. IF THEY CAN SURVIVE THIS, I CAN. THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY. GOODBYE, CHUCK.

THINGS GET REDDER, JUST LIKE I'VE BEEN TOLD.

RIGHT INTO THE CORE.

THIS IS THE SCARIEST THING I'VE EVER DONE.

MAYBE I'M WRONG. MAYBE I'M CRAZY.

MAYBE THEY REALLY ARE GHOSTS.

OR MAYBE THEY'RE DEMONS FROM HELL, LIKE THE CRAZY MAN SAID. THE KIND THAT CAN MAKE THEMSELVES LOOK LIKE PEOPLE YOU KNOW.

LIKE RAGGY-ANN AND WASSER-STEIN.

MAYBE I'LL DIE, NEVER KNOWING.

THEN THERE'S ONLY BLACKNESS AND SILENCE AND I LET GO OF IT ALL.

KUNK

AND THEN THINGS GET SCREWIER THAN EVER.

I'M DREAMING OR I'M DEAD OR I'M CRAZY. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH.

MARTHA. GET UP. YOU COME ALL THIS WAY AND START DROWNING. THAT'S DUMB, MARTHA.

KHAFF

RAGGYANN. SURE. WHY THE HELL NOT?

RAGGYANN'S MY FRIEND. SHE'S CRAZY AND SHE'S PSYCHIC-- AND SHE'S DEAD.

THIS IS ALL CRAZY. CRAZY.

NOT NUTS, MARTHA. EVERYTHING'S GREAT. NO LUNCH. THEY SAID YOU'D, STAY OUT BUT YOU DIDN'T. RAGGYANN KNEW BEFORE ANY-BODY.

I MISSED YOU, MARTHA. YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND.

I MISSED YOU TOO, RAGGY-ANN. BUT YOU'RE DEAD. YOU WERE IN CHICAGO WHEN THE ARYAN THRUST WENT CRAZY. I'M JUST IMAGINING THINGS.

NOT DEAD, MARTHA. BIGLIE. RAGGY-ANN HAPPY WIREHEAD NOW. NO ZIPLOCK.

IMAGINING THINGS. LIKE THIS FOREST. I'VE ALWAYS LOVED FORESTS.

BUT RAGGYANN SCHIZOPHRENIC. CAN'T NOT TALKRIGHT. CAN'T EXPLAIN.

THE AIR IS CRISP AND SO CLEAN IT ALMOST HURTS. IT CARRIES SMELLS I'VE NEVER SMELLED BEFORE.

MY HEAD GOES A LITTLE LIGHT. I WONDER IF I'M IN HEAVEN.

COME ON. TOMHAWK EXPLAIN. BABBLEFIRST MAYBECRY BUT EXPLAIN.

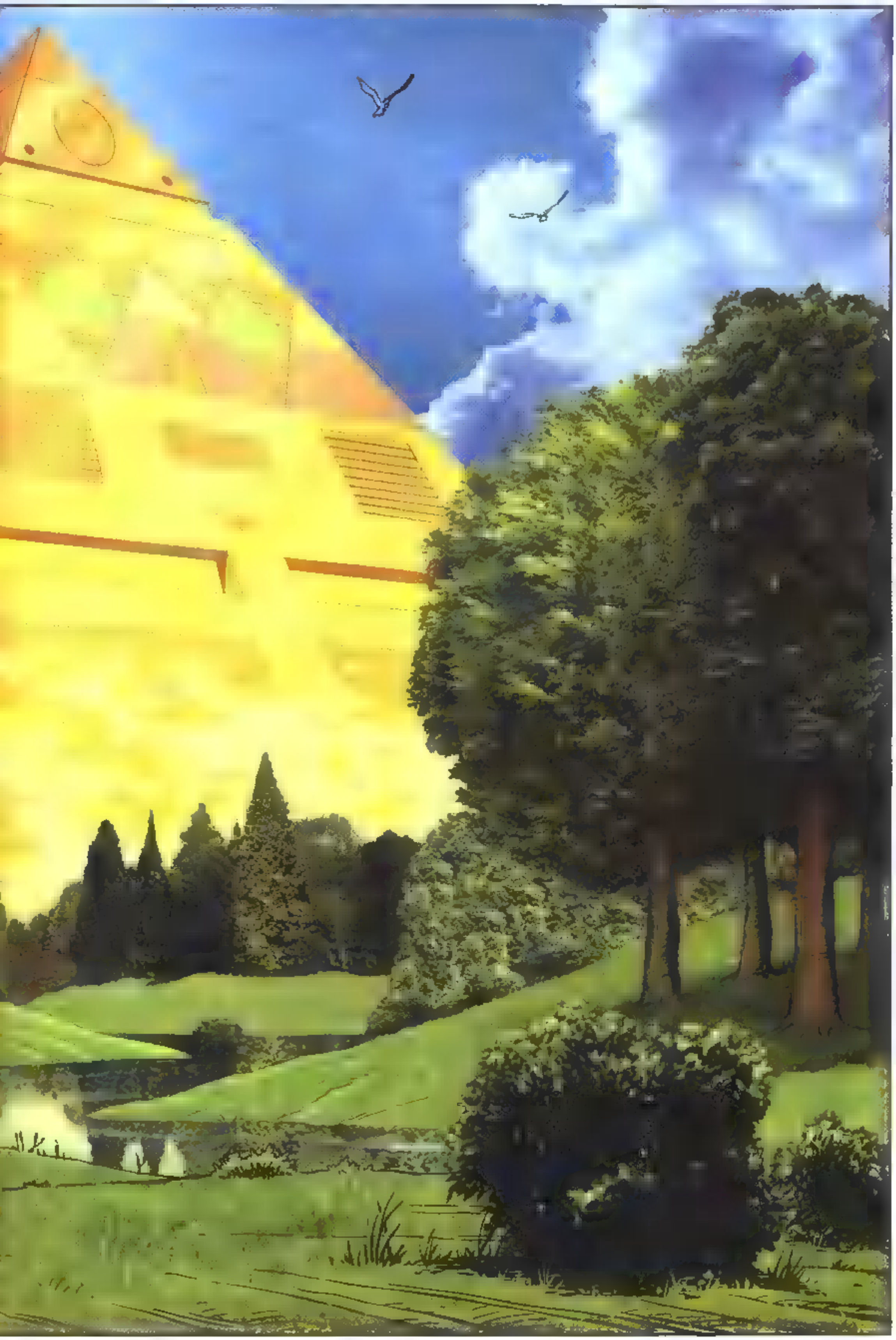
"TOMHAWK"?

TOMHAWK. MARTHA'S BOYFRIEND.

I HAVEN'T GOT A BOY-FRIEND. I'VE NEVER HAD A BOYFRIEND.

WHAT THE DEVIL? WHAT IS THAT THING?

HOME.



MARTHA.

MARTHA.

THE SIGHT OF HIM, THE SMELL OF HIM, HIS MUSCLES AGAINST AND AROUND ME--

--IT'S ALL REAL. ALL OF IT.

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO, MISTER.

HE STARES AT MY GUN FOR A GOOD *TEN SECONDS*--AND THEN HE BURSTS OUT *LAUGHING*.

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT HE SAYS HE'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING. THEN HE STARTS LAUGHING AGAIN.

THE SOUND BELONGS IN THIS BEAUTIFUL, IMPOSSIBLE PLACE.

BUT DO I?

FRANK MILLER • DAVE GIBBONS

MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR

4: THE PROMISED LAND

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

PRETTY *CRAZY* OUT THERE, ISN'T IT, FOLKS? WHAT A WORLD WE LIVE IN... HEH...

...BUT THERE'S *NO CALL* FOR *PANIC*. YOU'RE IN *GOOD HANDS*.

IT'S JUST THAT *SOMETIMES*--FOR YOUR OWN *GOOD*--THESE HANDS HAVE TO *SQUEEZE* A LITTLE, YES, THEY DO.

NOW, NOBODY LIKES *RATIONING* OR *CURFEWS*, OR ALL THESE DARN *NEWS BLACKOUTS*..

-- BUT THAT'S NO REASON TO GO OFF *HALF-COCKED* AND DO SOMETHING YOU'RE BOUND TO BE *SORRY* FOR.

STRIKES AND *RIOTS* AND *NASTY LETTERS* TO *ME* JUST DON'T DO *ANY-BODY* ANY GOOD.

AND IF YOU ALL KEEP THIS *UP*, WELL, I'LL JUST HAVE TO BR!NG THE *HAMMER* DOWN. AND NOBODY WANTS *THAT*.

NOBODY WANTS *THAT*.

NOBODY WANTS *THAT*.

NOBODY WANTS *THAT*.

NOBODY WANTS THAT.

NOBODY WANTS THAT.

DAMN IT -- HE'S SKIPPING!

I SAID THE PRESIDENT IS SKIPPING!

MUST'VE BEEN A POWER SURGE. IT'LL TAKE HOURS TO FIX IT. CAN'T BE HELPED.

HOURS. CAN'T BE HELPED.

OVER-TIME. PAY AND A HALF.

WELCOME TO HARMONY, SIR. AND MY APOLOGIES FOR THE MALFUNCTION OF THE DEFENSE GRID.

IT GOT A LITTLE HAIRY UP THERE, DIDN'T IT?

SERIOUS MALFUNCTION. ALMOST HIT BY LIGHTNING BOLT. INEXCUSABLE.

RAIN INCONVENIENT. ANNOYING.

YES, SIR. WE HOPED TO HAVE THAT SORTED OUT BEFORE YOU GOT HERE, BUT YOU KNOW HOW THINGS ARE.

IT'S THOSE DAMN GHOSTS. SCREWING EVERY-THING UP.

GHOSTS. WASHINGTON FOUND THEM. CLEVER GIRL. SURVIVOR.

NOW WE FIND WASHING-TON.

SIR, SHE'S BEEN IN THE RADIO-ACTIVE ZONE FOR TWELVE HOURS. IT'S TOO LATE FOR HER -- IF SHE'S NOT DEAD YET SHE WILL BE --

GAKK

WASHINGTON ALIVE. MY GUESS WASHINGTON ALIVE. CLEVER GIRL. SURVIVOR. ANNOYING.

BAD GIRL. FOUND GHOSTS. NOW WE FIND HER. IN RADIOACTIVE ZONE. USE HARMONY. UNDER MY COMMAND. DIRECT COMMAND.

KHOFF

SIR -- NO -- YOU ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO COMMAND THIS STATION! I COULD TAKE THIS ALL THE WAY TO NELSON!

AUTHOR-IZATION PENDING. CALL PENTAGON. NELSON OFFICE WILL CONFIRM AUTHOR-IZATION. BAD SITUATION. DRASTIC ACTION REQUIRED. CORRECTIVE SURGERY.

READY HARMONY FOR DEPLOYMENT. GHOSTS DIE. WASHINGTON DIES.

IT WAS THE SCARIEST THING I EVER DID.

I WAS ON THE TRAIL OF A BUNCH OF ***SUBVERSIVES*** CALLED THE "***GHOSTS***" AND THE TRAIL LED STRAIGHT INTO THE ***CORE*** OF THE ***RADIOACTIVE ZONE***

AND I ***FOLLOWED*** THEM, LIKE AN IDIOT.

BUT THERE WASN'T ANY ***FIRE***. THERE WASN'T ANY ***CORE***.

THERE WAS A BIG ***FLASH*** OF ***LIGHT*** AND I BLACKED OUT.

THEN THERE WERE ***TREES*** AND ***FLOWERS*** AND ***PEOPLE*** WHO OUGHT TO BE ***DEAD***.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'M IN ***HEAVEN*** OR ***WHAT***.

FOR THE LAST FEW MONTHS, THINGS HAVE BEEN GETTING ***WEIRDER*** AND ***WEIRDER*** AND THEY HAVEN'T STOPPED GETTING WEIRDER YET.

YOU RUN ON, NOW, RAGGY-ANN. YOU'RE LATE FOR SCHOOL. YOU CAN SEE MARTHA AGAIN LATER.

OKAY. BYE, MARTHA.

YOU CAN START EXPLAINING THINGS NOW.

HE LOOKS AT ME AGAIN THAT WAY HE LOOKS AT ME. THAT WAY NOBODY'S EVER LOOKED AT ME BEFORE.

HE SMILES AND TAKES A BREATH AND LOOKS AWAY, AT ***RAGGYANN***. SHE'S SO ***HAPPY*** NOW...

IT WAS THE ***KID***, RAGGYANN. THAT'S HOW I GOT INTO THIS. THE ***MILITARY*** GOT THEIR HANDS ON HER AGAIN.

LAST I HEARD YOU WERE AT A ***HOSPITAL*** IN ***CHICAGO***. WHEN THE ***BOMB*** HIT.

SHE WAS NEVER MORE THAN A WEAPON TO THEM.

THEY HAD ME PATCHED UP IN THREE DAYS. THEN THE *INTERROGATION* STARTED --IN *WASHINGTON* I DID WELL ENOUGH. I LIED WHEN I NEEDED TO.

BUT RAGGYANN... IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THEM TO REALIZE SHE WAS *PSYCHIC*. THEY SHIPPED HER OFF TO MICHIGAN.

I FIGURED THERE WAS NO WAY TO FIND HER. BUT SHE *HAUNTED* ME, APPEARING LIKE A *PHANTOM*. LIKE SHE DID TO YOU, A FEW WEEKS BACK.

THEY HAD HER AT A *PEACE FORCE* BASE, WIRED IN TO SOME DAMNED *MILITARY COMPUTER* CONDUCTING THE WAR AGAINST *DETROIT*.

YOU HUNGRY? I COULD FIX US SOME FOOD.

THAT'S OKAY. JUST GO ON.

I GOT HER OUT OF THERE. OF COURSE THEY CAME LOOKING FOR HER, SO WE WENT UNDERGROUND. IT'S NOT THAT HARD TO DO, THESE DAYS. THINGS FALLING APART THE WAY THEY ARE.

WE WANDERED AROUND A LOT. FELL IN WITH A GROUP OF *ECO-TERRORISTS*. THAT WAS FUN FOR A WHILE. UNTIL THEY STARTED SHOOTING EACH OTHER.

ALONG THE WAY I HOOKED UP WITH A *TOXIC WASTE SPECIALIST* BY THE NAME OF *WHITAKKER*. HE GOT US IN WITH THE GROUP HERE.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE? WE OUGHT TO BE *TOAST*. I MEAN, THIS IS THE *RADIO-ACTIVE ZONE*.

NOT ANY-MORE. WE'VE BEEN CLEANING IT UP. RE-CLAIMING MILLIONS OF ACRES. IN A COUPLE OF YEARS THE ZONE WILL BE THE CLEANEST SPOT IN NORTH AMERICA--MAYBE EVEN THE *PLANET*.

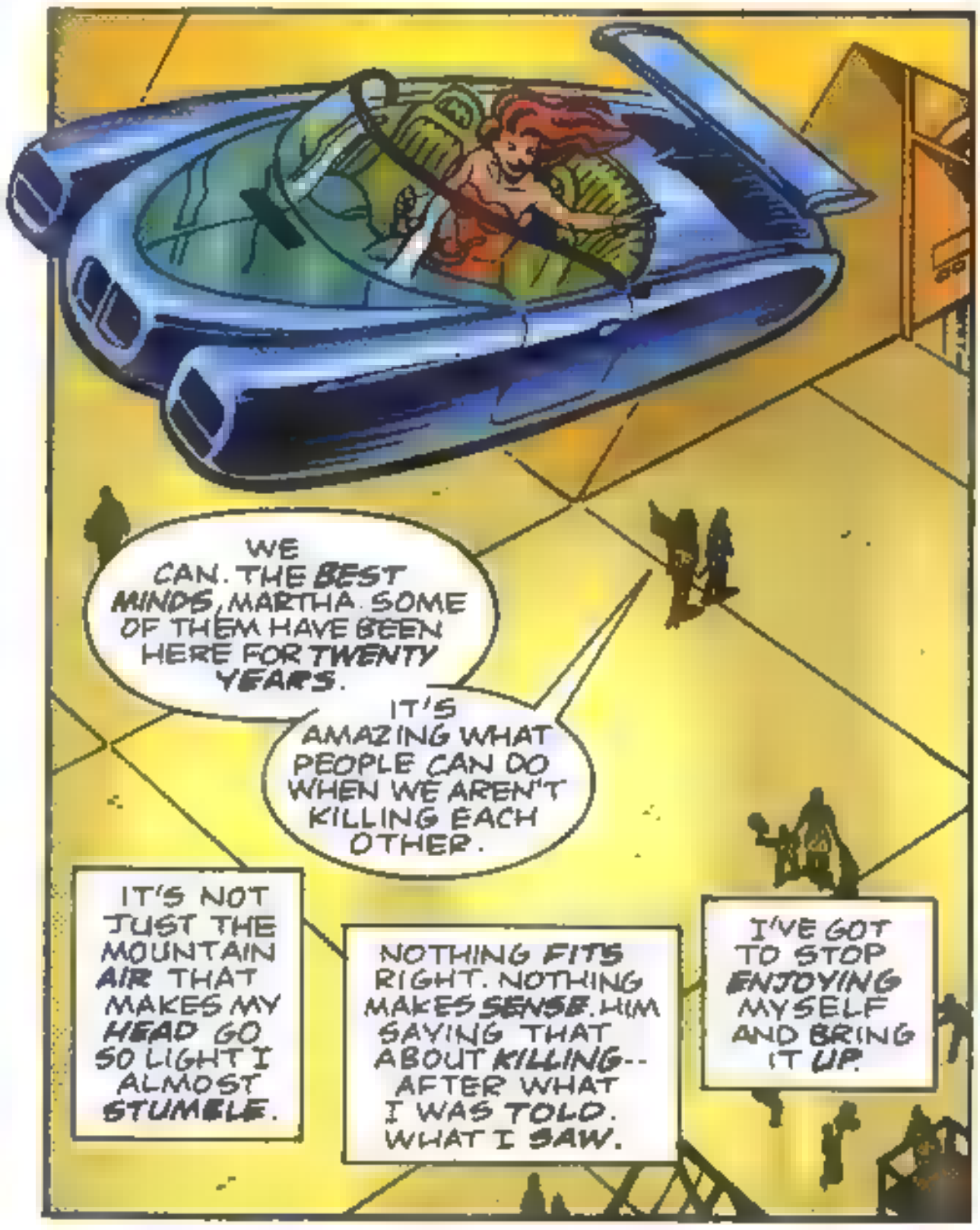
THEN WE'LL GET TO WORK ON THE REST OF THE PLANET.

BUT I *DROVE* RIGHT INTO THE *CORE*. I *SAW* IT.

OH, THE *SCREEN*. SAME PRINCIPLE AS THE *INVISIBILITY* GEAR WE USE. IT'S JUST AN ILLUSION.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT HUNGRY? I COULD EAT A *HORSE*.

NOBODY CAN CLEAN UP RADIATION. NOT AS FAST AS YOU'RE SAYING.


WE CAN. THE *BEST MINDS*, MARTHA. SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN HERE FOR *TWENTY YEARS*.
IT'S AMAZING WHAT PEOPLE CAN DO WHEN WE AREN'T KILLING EACH OTHER.
IT'S NOT JUST THE MOUNTAIN *AIR* THAT MAKES MY *HEAD* GO SO LIGHT I ALMOST *STUMBLE*.
NOTHING *FITS* RIGHT. NOTHING MAKES *SENSE*. HIM SAYING THAT ABOUT *KILLING*-- AFTER WHAT I WAS *TOLD*. WHAT I *SAW*.
I'VE GOT TO STOP *ENJOYING* MYSELF AND *BRING* IT *UP*.

"TREASON," HE SAYS, LIKE IT'S SOMETHING **NOBLE**. THIS IS ALL REALLY SCREWY.

THINGS ARE FALLING **APART** OUT THERE, MARTHA. THE INFRA-STRUCTURE'S **SHOT**-- THERE'S NO SAVING IT, WITH **PAK** IN CHARGE.

SO WE'RE **WAITING**-- UNTIL THE **COMMUNICATIONS** GO DOWN ONCE AND FOR ALL AND WE CAN MOVE IN AND **FIX** THINGS.

THOSE **GLADIOLAS** LOOK **BEAUTIFUL**, CHARLIE.

HUMPH. GLADIOLAS, HE CALLS THEM. GLADIOLAS. THESE ARE *POINSETTIAS*, BOY.

GLADIOLAS, HE SAYS. HUMPH.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "*FIX THINGS*"?

JUST WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE. WE'RE GOING TO ESTABLISH A NEW **GOVERN-MENT**. A WHOLE NEW **WAY** OF GOVERNING. ONE THAT ISN'T *INSANE*.

GO! GO! GO!

EXTREMIST!

IDEOLOGICAL COWARD! MED-IEVALIST!

OOF!

AND WHAT KIND OF **GOVERN-MENT** ARE YOU PEOPLE GOING TO BE SO NICE TO **GIVE** US?

WE'RE STILL WORKING THAT OUT.

LOOK THERE--A **DEBATE**. THIS SHOULD BE *FUN*.

LIBERTARIAN CAPITALISM IS AN **ABSOLUTE**, YOU *IRRATION-ALIST!*

RIGHT. SURE. AN **ABSOLUTE**. THAT'S WHERE YOU **SOCIAL DARWINISTS** ALWAYS **SCREW UP**. TAKING IT **SO FAR**.

PRIVATELY OWNED **FIRE DEPARTMENTS**, RIGHT? LETTING **BABIES** BUY **HEROIN**, RIGHT?

RIGHT! **NO EXCEPTIONS!** IT'S YOU **NON-ABSOLUTIST WITCH DOCTORS** WHO'VE TURNED **CONSTITUTIONAL LAW** INTO AN OPEN **SEWER!**

ECO-SOCIALISM IS NOTHING BUT **FASCISM** WITH A **FACE-LIFT!**

THIS IS A **DEBATE**?

NOT REALLY. BUT EVEN **INTELLECTUALS** NEED **EXERCISE**. BESIDES, IT HELPS THEM BLOW OFF **STEAM**. JUST WATCH, MARTHA. THEY'LL GO OUT FOR **BEERS** AFTER THIS.

NO HARM IN A LITTLE **RECREATION**, IS THERE?

YOU **SOCIAL DARWINISTS** HAVE GOT A **PLUG** SO FAR UP YOUR **BUTTS** YOU CAN'T **THINK** STRAIGHT!

OOF!

WITCH DOCTOR! DEATH WORSHIPPER!

URFF!

RECREATION. I TRY TO REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I HEARD THAT WORD.

THEY GO ON AND ON ARGUING AND WRESTLING. I DON'T UNDERSTAND MUCH OF IT.

BUT IT'S SO **SILLY** I ALMOST WANT TO **LAUGH**.

Five minutes to combat deployment. Checking systems. Power levels acceptable. All systems secure.

WE HAVE WASHINGTON'S **COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE** TARGETED, SIR. SHE'S VERY CLOSE TO THE ZONE'S **CORE**--IF SHE'S STILL WEARING IT.

STILL WEARING IT. STILL ALIVE. SURVIVOR. WITH GHOSTS. BAD GIRL.

Alert. Proton misfeed. Adjusting systems.

AAAA

ZAKK

MEDIC!

Repair team dispatched. Estimate two hours until full systems capability

I'M VERY SORRY, SIR. YOU KNOW HOW IT IS, THESE DAYS.

ANNOYING.

FRUSTRATING.

HE KEEPS GOING ON ABOUT HOW I SHOULD EAT. SO FINALLY I GIVE IN.

THE FOOD'S LIKE NOTHING I EVER TASTED BEFORE. ALL WILD COLORS AND TASTES THAT EXPLODE IN MY MOUTH.

IT'S LIKE THE AIR HERE. SO FRESH AND NEW. I FEEL LIKE EVERYTHING I'VE EVER KNOWN IS GRAY AND USED UP AND SAD.

THIS IS SUCH A HAPPY PLACE...

CAN YOU BELIEVE THOSE BEETS? IT'S A GOOD THING THEY AREN'T FATTENING--I'D BE A BLIMP BY NOW.

THAT'S AKASHA, GOD BLESS HER. HER PURIFICATION/REJUVENATION SEQUENCE. ONCE WE CLEAN THE LAND OF RADIATION, SHE BRINGS IT BACK TO LIFE.

You'll be billed for that, sir.

AKASHA'S ONE HELL OF A COOK, TOO. I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU TO HER. IT'S A GOOD ENOUGH EXCUSE TO GET A DINNER OUT OF HER.

IT'S NOT JUST THE DEATH AND SICKNESS WE'RE GOING TO FIGHT, MARTHA-- IT'S THE QUALITY OF LIFE. FOOD LIKE THIS. AIR LIKE THIS.

I WANT TO ARGUE WITH HIM. I WANT TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT COOGAN AND THE MILLIONS DEAD IN OKLAHOMA CITY--

--BUT I CAN'T STOP EATING.

THE FOOD'S DELICIOUS. IT MAKES ME FEEL GREAT.

KRAKOOM

Alert. Hull breach. Rapid decompression. Power overload countered and corrected. Estimate two hours, fifty seconds to deployment.

AAAAA

AAAAAA

AAAAA

VERY FRUSTRATING.

"LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND," HE SAYS, HAULING *FLIGHT PACKS* THAT ACTUALLY *WORK* FROM A STAND RIGHT OUT IN THE OPEN WHERE ANYBODY COULD STEAL THEM.

I GUESS THESE PEOPLE TRUST EACH OTHER.

IT WAS CLINCH -- PROFESSOR *JACK CLINCH* -- WHO STARTED ALL THIS, WITH HIS BREAK-THROUGH IN *DERADIATION*.

WHY DIDN'T HE TURN IT OVER TO THE *GOVERNMENT*?

HE *DID*. THEY OFFERED HIM A BILLION DOLLARS TO FORGET HE EVER CAME UP WITH IT.

WHEN HE REFUSED, THEY TRIED TO KILL HIM.

THAT'S *CRAZY*!

HAVEN'T YOU CAUGHT ON YET, MARTHA? THEY DON'T *WANT* THINGS TO GET BETTER. THEY DON'T *WANT* THE WAR TO END.

THEY'VE HAD *MARTIAL LAW* FOR *THREE YEARS* NOW AND IT'S GOTTEN *GOOD* TO THEM.

WHERE DO YOU PEOPLE GET *OFF*? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU *ARE*? NOBODY *ELECTED* YOU.

NOBODY ELECTED THE PEOPLE WHO ARE IN POWER RIGHT NOW, EITHER.

WE ELECTED THE *PRESIDENT*. I DIDN'T VOTE FOR HIM, BUT HE WAS *ELECTED*.

THE *PRESIDENT* WAS *ASSASSINATED* ON THE NIGHT OF HIS *INAUGURATION*. THEY'RE USING A *ROBOT* TO *IMPERSONATE* HIM.

ARE YOU *SERIOUS*?

HE NODS, HIS JAW SET. "*DEAD SERIOUS*," HE SAYS, LIKE HE'S IN CHURCH.

THINKING THAT MAKES ME ASK HIM IF THERE'S A CHURCH HERE. HE SMILES AND NODS. "*SIX*, SO FAR," HE SAYS.

I DON'T KNOW WHO TO *BELIEVE*. I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* TO BELIEVE.

AND I FEEL *SO GOOD*, I HAVE TO *FORCE* MYSELF TO EVEN *CARE* ABOUT *COOGAN* AND *OKLAHOMA CITY*.

I DON'T KNOW *WHY* I FEEL *SO GOOD*.

WASSER-STEIN. THIS IS *CHICK*. GET *DOWN* HERE, YOU *IDIOT*.

YES, SIR. RIGHT AWAY, SIR.

NOW WHAT?

IT'S ALL RIGHT. EVERY-THING'S FINE.

HE DOESN'T SOUND LIKE HE MEANS IT.

MAYBE I'LL FINALLY GET SOME IDEA OF WHAT'S *REALLY* GOING ON HERE. IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE *TRUE*.

WASN'T MY FAULT. CAN'T BE HELPED--

AAAAA

AAAAGLAKKK

UNACCEPTABLE.

...re-routing command systems to compensate for human error. Estimate forty minutes to deployment capability.

IT'S WEIRD TO HEAR WASSERSTEIN CALL ANYBODY "SIR," BUT PRETTY SOON I UNDERSTAND WHY.

WHEN I HEARD THE NAME "CHICK" I DIDN'T HAVE ANY IDEA IT WAS CHARLES SHOCK.

FOUR-STAR GENERAL CHARLES SHOCK. A HERO IN EVERY WAR FROM HONG KONG TO THE AMAZON.

I THOUGHT HE WAS STILL WORKING FOR THE PEACE FORCE.

I CAN VOUCH FOR HER, SIR.

DID YOU HAPPEN TO NOTICE THE UNIFORM SHE'S WEARING? SHE'S PAX, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE!

SO WERE YOU --UNTIL YOU GOT OUR INVIT-ATION.

DON'T TRY TO CONFUSE ME, WASSERSTEIN. THE RULES ARE THE RULES. NOBODY COMES IN WITHOUT APPROVAL OF THE BOARD.

MARTHA?

DAMN, IT IS YOU...

COOGAN!?

THAT DOES IT. I'M DREAMING. YOU'RE DEAD. I SAW YOU KILLED. THEY HIT YOU WITH A RAY. ZAP. YOU WERE GONE.

I WAS *INVISIBLE*. THEY MADE ME *INVISIBLE*. AND THEY BROUGHT ME *HERE*, GOD BLESS THEM!

I SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN* YOU'D SIGN UP, TOO.

I DIDN'T *BRING* HER IN, SIR. SHE *BROKE* IN. IT WAS *CRAZY*, BUT SHE *DID* IT.

NO. IT WASN'T CRAZY. NOT IF YOU KNOW HER RECORD. FOR HER IT WAS *TYPICAL*, BREAKING IN HERE. THAT'S MARTHA WASHINGTON. SHE'S ONE OF *PAX*'S BEST-KEPT *SECRETS*.

ONLY NINETEEN YEARS OLD-- BUT SHE'D BE A *CAPTAIN* BY NOW, IF SHE HADN'T MADE ENEMIES.

THEN *MAKE* HER A CAPTAIN, GENERAL. IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE SHE'S EXACTLY THE KIND OF SOLDIER YOU COULD *USE*.

IF SHE'S *WITH* US.

I HAVEN'T SIGNED UP FOR ANYTHING ... GOD, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, COOGAN. I WAS SURE YOU WERE DEAD.

I'M MORE *ALIVE* THAN I'VE *EVER* BEEN. I■ WORKING FOR *DAUMIER* AGAIN. AND THIS *PLACE*--IT'S AN ENGINEER'S *DREAM*.

I'M STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT *WHAT* THIS PLACE IS--AND *WHY* ALL THESE *SECRETS* ARE BEING KEPT FROM PEOPLE WHO *NEED* THEM.

IT'S *NECESSARY*, MARTHA--FOR *NOW*. EVERY TIME ANYBODY COMES UP WITH SOMETHING THAT'LL MAKE THINGS *BETTER*, THOSE *PAX* SLOBS-- UH, NO OFFENSE--

--THOSE *PAX* SLOBS JUST TURN IT INTO ANOTHER *WEAPON*. JUST LOOK WHAT THEY'VE DONE WITH *HARMONY*.

SHE WILL BE WITH US. JUST LEAVE HER TO ME. I'LL TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY.

YOU'RE *DREAMING*, KID. SHE'S GOING TO THE *BRIG*.

AW, HELL. WE DON'T *HAVE* A BRIG ...

I GUESS THAT MAKES ME YOUR *PRISONER*, DOESN'T IT?

I GUESS SO.

LIEUTENANT-- FOR THE LAST TWO MONTHS, *PAX* OFFICERS HAVE BEEN ISSUED *COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES*. WHERE'S YOURS?

HERE I AM A *PRISONER* OF *WAR* AND I'M PROVIDING *INFORMATION* TO THE *ENEMY* WITHOUT EVEN *THINKING* ABOUT IT...

IT JUST SEEMS SO *NATURAL*. I SAY THE WORDS BEFORE I EVEN *KNOW* I DO.

I TRADED MY COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE TO *MUTANTS*, SIR. IN EXCHANGE FOR TRANSPORT. ABOUT TWENTY MILES BACK.

SCAN THAT AREA, SERGEANT.

YES, SIR. NO SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT...

SIR... I'M READING A *SERIOUS* POWER BUILD-UP --AT *HARMONY*, SIR.

OH, DEAR LORD. NO.

OH, *CHRIST*! EVEN IF THEY'RE TWENTY MILES OFF THE *MARK*...

SOUND THE *ALARM*! *RED ALERT*!

Alert. Red Alert. All non-military personnel are hereby confined to quarters. This is not a drill. Red Alert.

All systems operational. Power levels at eighty per cent. Harmony is ready for deployment at voice command.

DEPLOY ALL AVAILABLE POWER.

Repeat. This is not a drill. We are under attack. All military personnel tune your commlinks to zero-five-zero and await further instruction.

THIS IS *BAD*, ISN'T IT?

THE *WORST*.

READY *EMERGENCY POWER*. GET THE *SHIELDS* UP AT *MAX*!

YES, SIR.

YES, SIR.

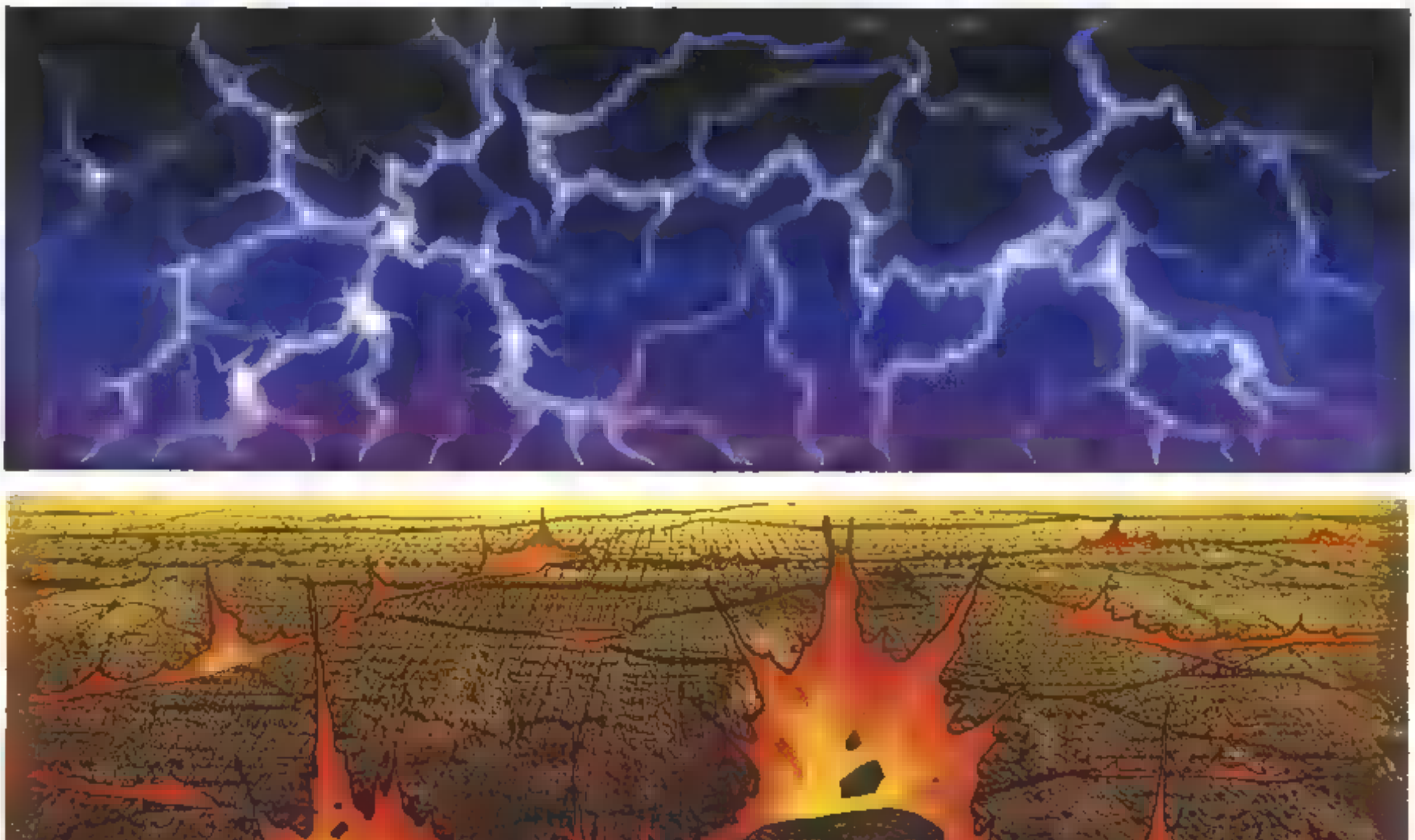
AWESOME!

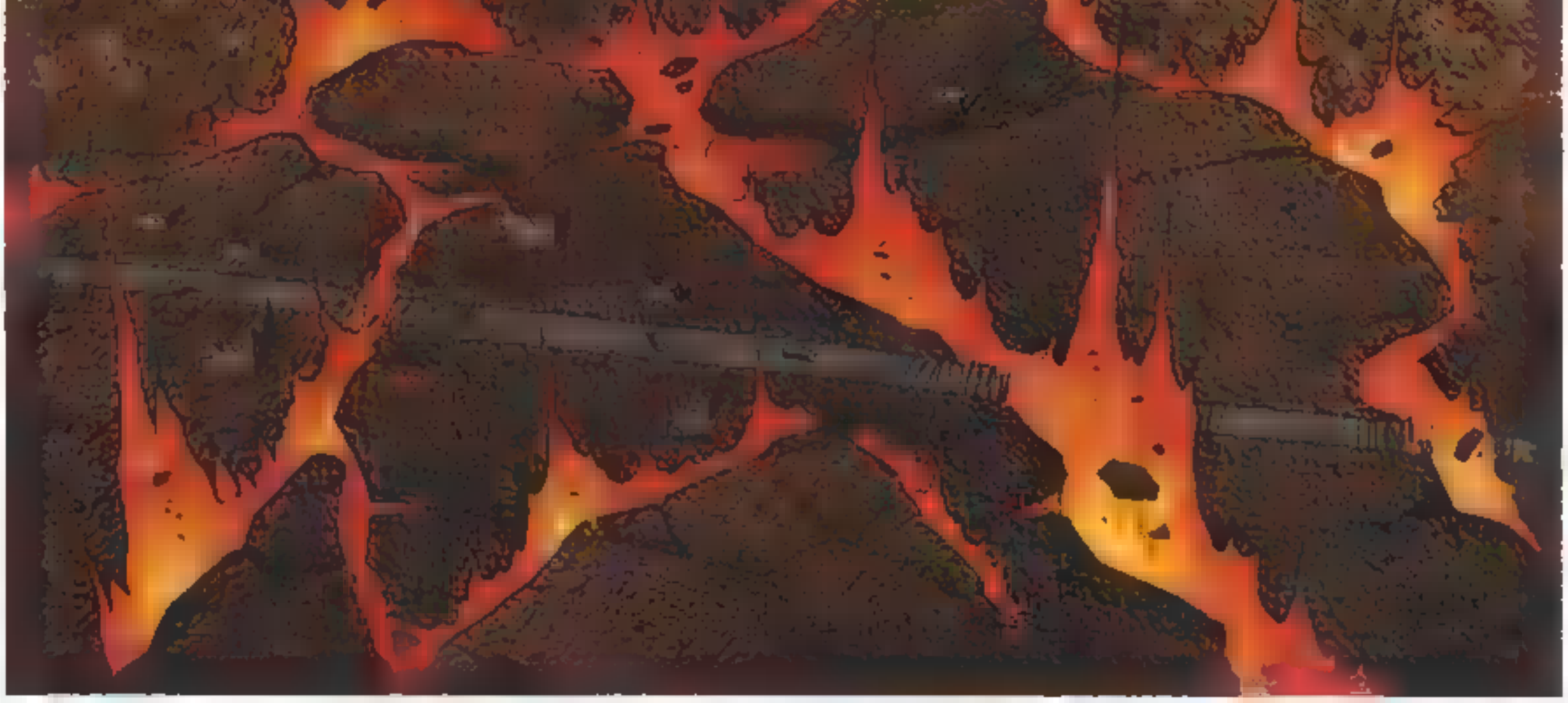
WICKED AWESOME!

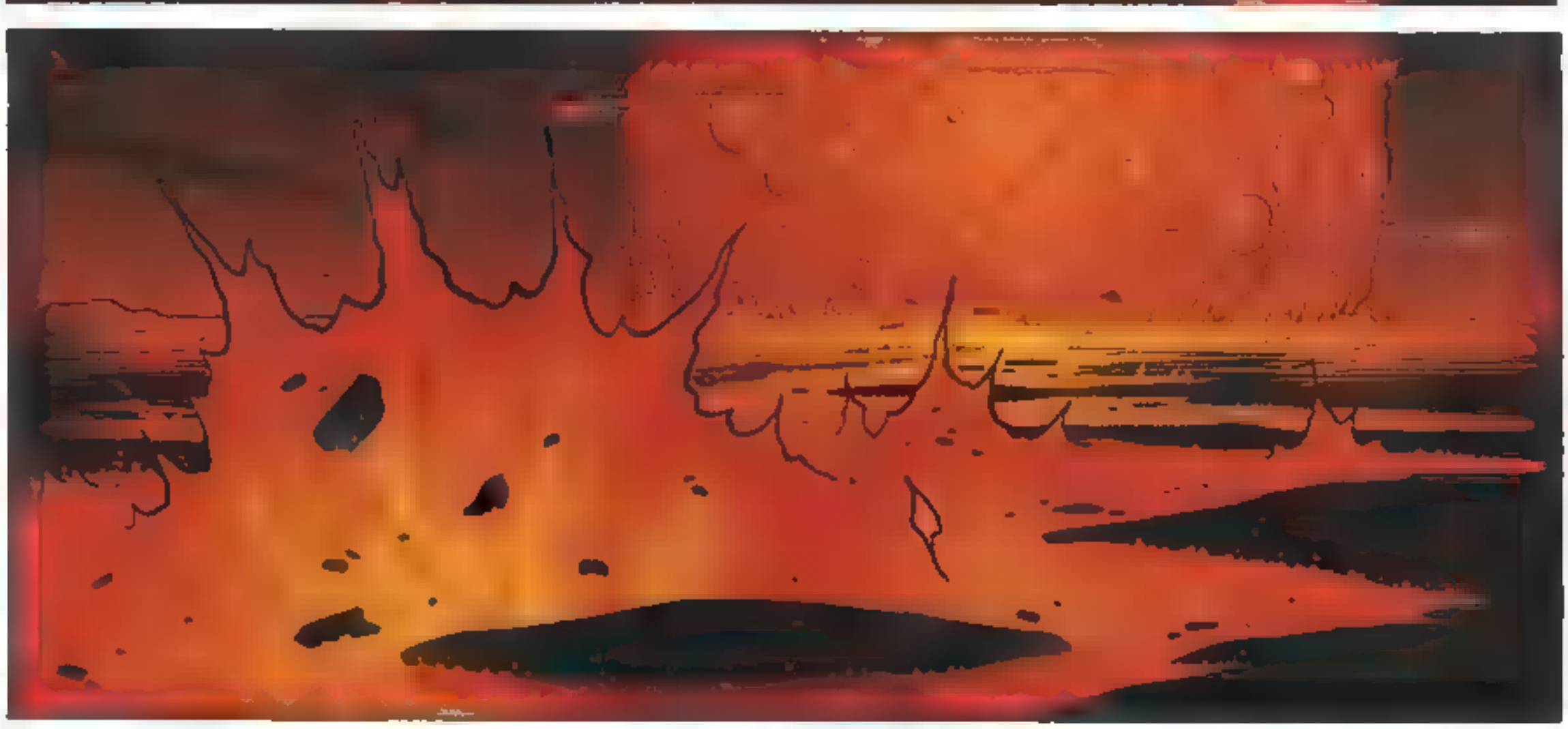
Hi. I'm **Chuck**. I want to be your **friend**.

GETTING SCARY.

GYAAA!
Oh, dear.







WE'RE NOTHING. WE'RE DUST.
WE'RE JUST SPECKS OF DUST--
--SPECKS OF DUST ON A RUG THAT GOD SHAKES CLEAN.

GOD.

I TRY TO CATCH MY BREATH AND PRAY TO GOD.

GOD.

FOR I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG, IT GETS LOUDER AND LOUDER AND EVERYBODY'S SCREAMING AND I'M SCARED AS HELL AND MAYBE I SCREAM TOO. I CAN'T HEAR IT IF I DO.

THEN I FINALLY SHAKE IT OFF AND STOP FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF AND REALIZE I OUGHT TO BE SOME USE TO SOMEBODY.

IT'S CRAZY.

IT'S LIKE SOMETHING FROM THOSE BIBLE MOVIES MOM ALWAYS MADE US WATCH.

THOSE MOVIES WHERE THERE WEREN'T ANY BLACK PEOPLE AND GOD WAS REALLY MEAN.

IT'S CRAZY.

IT'S LIKE GOD REALLY HATES US, AFTER ALL.

GOD. THE WRATH OF GOD.

IT'S LIKE THE CRAZY MAN BACK IN OKLAHOMA CITY SAID. OR AT LEAST LIKE I THINK HE SAID. I CAN'T REMEMBER FOR SURE.

HELL HAS COME TO EARTH.

HELL HAS COME TO PARADISE.

FOR A WHILE I KIND OF GO AWAY. OFF INTO MYSELF. LIKE I DID BACK IN THE RIOTS WHEN I WAS A KID.
WHEN I COME BACK SOME TIME HAS PASSED. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG. PROBABLY JUST A FEW MINUTES BUT IT FEELS LIKE LONGER.
IT SINKS IN.

WASSERSTEIN AND THE PEOPLE HERE, THEY DIDN'T KILL **COOGAN**. AND THEY DIDN'T KILL **OKLAHOMA CITY**.

IT WAS **HARMONY**.

IT WAS **PAX**.

NOT GOD.

PAX.

IT WAS *PAX*.

THEY *LIE* AND *LIE* AND *KILL* AND *KILL* AND THERE'S NO *END* TO IT.

COOGAN WAS *RIGHT*. THEY TURN *EVERYTHING* INTO JUST ANOTHER WAY TO *KILL*. JUST ANOTHER *WEAPON*.

THAT'S WHAT THEY DID TO ME. I'M JUST ANOTHER *WEAPON*.

IT WAS *PAX*, DAMN THEM.

IT WAS *PAX*.

TO HELL WITH THEM.

TO HELL WITH THEM. THE BASTARDS. TO HELL WITH THEM.

GET YOURSELF PATCHED UP AND READY FOR ACTION, WASSERSTEIN. WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO.

YES, MA'AM.

FRANK MILLER DAVE GIBBONS

MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR

5: KINGDOM COME

DAMN **CURFEW**. I'LL BE LUCKY IF I GET HOME BEFORE SOME **PAX** RAT GETS HIS HANDS ON ME.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU **SAY**, MRS. GILDER. YOU NEVER KNOW WHO'S **LISTENING**.

CURFEW IN **TEN MINUTES**, FOLKS. IT'S FOR YOUR **OWN GOOD**. AND REMEMBER--**MY ORDERS** SAY **SHOOT ON SIGHT!**

VENUS.

Abdul Mohammed-- you called me just in **time**. I'm currently in contact with 32% of our forces.

You must be **brave**, Abdul. Our timetable has **changed**. Our hour of destiny is at **hand**.

PAX has found and **attacked** our **home base**. We have suffered many casualties. If we don't strike **now**--we will **fail**.

You must be **brave**, Abdul. You must play your **part**.

PAX officers have surrounded your shop and will be upon you in moments. Do not worry. We leaked your name and location. This is your little piece of the plan.

Do not **resist** them. Let them take you **prisoner**. In the **camp** a **guard** named **Steveson** will approach you. Give him the following **code**...

You have to be **brave**, Martha. You have to play your **part**.

But you've **always** been brave, haven't you? It's the **teamwork** I'm worried about. I can walk you through the technology--but the **teamwork**, Martha. It's desperately **important** that you do what I **say**.

IT'S REALLY WEIRD HOW SHE MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON SHE'S TALKING TO.

SHE'S TALKING TO ABOUT ***TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE*** AT THE ***SAME TIME*** AND IT'S LIKE WE'RE ***EACH*** THE ***ONLY ONE***.

BUT THAT'S ***COMPUTERS***. I JUST NEVER KNEW ANYBODY WOULD EVER ***MAKE*** ONE THAT WAS SO ***SMART***.

I'M READY, VENUS. JUST KEEP TELLING ME HOW ALL THIS STUFF WORKS.

AND IT ***DOES*** WORK. ***EVERYTHING*** THESE PEOPLE MAKE ***WORKS***.

I'M PLAYING ***CATCH-UP*** AND I'M ABOUT ***THIRTY SECONDS*** FROM ***COMBAT***.

You'll do **fine**, Martha. We're **counting** on you.

STOP READING MY THOUGHTS, VENUS. IT'S HARD TO THINK STRAIGHT WITH YOU CRAWLING AROUND INSIDE MY HEAD.
I'm sorry, Martha. I didn't mean to intrude.

SHE DIDN'T MEAN TO *INTRUDE*. RIGHT INSIDE MY *HEAD* AND SHE DIDN'T MEAN TO *INTRUDE*.

I FEEL HER PULL BACK TO THE EDGES. SHE'S JUST A GENTLE BLUE HUM, ON THE EDGES OF MY MIND.

IT'S HARD TO KEEP *HOLD* OF MY OWN MIND, WITH ALL THAT'S GOING ON.

I'M A *TRAITOR* NOW. AND IT DOESN'T *BOTHER* ME ONE DAMN *BIT*.

AND A LITTLE *PART* OF ME TELLS ME IT *OUGHT* TO BOTHER ME. IT TELLS ME MY *MOM* WOULD BE *HORRIFIED* TO KNOW I'M A *TRAITOR*.

BUT IT *DOESN'T* BOTHER ME, WHETHER IT SHOULD OR NOT.

AND A BIGGER, STRONGER VOICE INSIDE ME IS TELLING ME I'M DOING THE RIGHT THING. IT'S BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN ANY VOICE I'VE EVER HEARD FROM ANYBODY ELSE.

MAYBE MY MOM WOULD *AGREE* WITH IT, IF SHE WAS ALIVE. I'LL NEVER KNOW.

BUT IT'S MY VOICE AND IT'S THE ONLY ONE I'M GOING TO FOLLOW FROM NOW ON.

MY NAME'S **MARTHA WASHINGTON**. I'M A **TRAITOR**.

THIS IS THE **SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

I'M A TRAITOR.

THAT DOESN'T BOTHER ME, RIGHT NOW.

Ready weapons. Lock targets. Those planes are on course to destroy our **home base**--and all our **hopes**. Take them down **quickly**.

Wasserstein--your target is in **range**. And it's only going to be **three seconds** before you're in **his** range.

I **GOT** HIM -- I **GOT** HIM--

A **direct hit. Fine** work, Wasserstein.

PIECE OF **CAKE**.

A CHEER GOES UP. "DUCKS IN A BARREL," SOMEBODY LAUGHS.

IT'S ALWAYS EASIER TO KILL PEOPLE WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE THEM.

POOM

I SHOULD KNOW.

Your **target** is within **range--teamwork**, Martha...

THEY DON'T HAVE TO DIE. I'M SICK OF KILLING.

Martha-- we can't **spare** your **life** or your **time**--

SHUT UP, VENUS.

GAAAA

KRAASH

A WEEK AGO, I MIGHT'VE BEEN *IN* THIS PLANE --FIGHTING FOR **PAX**.

THEY DON'T *HAVE* TO *DIE*.

YAARGG

PAX

THIS OUGHT TO **DO** IT-- IF THEY HAVEN'T CHANGED THE **CODES**--THIS OUGHT TO **DO** IT--

Evacuation sequence complete. **Alert. All personnel. Prepare for immediate evacuation. This is not a drill.**

THEY DON'T **HAVE** TO **DIE**.

Your **resourcefulness** is **admirable**, Martha--but that's exactly the kind of **risk** we can't **afford**.

Attention, all my friends: **All six** airborne units report **success**. The first **Pax assault** on our **home base** has been **neutralized**.

And we are free to proceed to our **next** target. The **second Pax** assault has been **scrubbed** due to massive **mechanical failures**...

HUNK OF **JUNK**!

WHAT DO WE **PAY** YOU CLOWNS FOR?

SO NOW IT'S **ABUSE**. I'M REPORTING YOU TO THE **UNION**!

And I have **good news** in the **ground war**, as well. Our agents have successfully implanted the **McGoohan Virus** into **Pax's Master Detention System**--it's effects are **immediate** and **system-wide**--

--casualties are as yet **light--massive** desertions by **Pax** officers are reported...

...two million political prisoners are seizing arms and communications!

The revolution has begun!

Please hold. Please hold.

Oh, dear. Oh, dear.

The revolution has begun--but not without its cost.

We must be mindful--as everything seems to be going our way, we must be mindful that ours is the battle for a continent--and many are dying.

Details are not yet available--but early reports indicate a nuclear device has been detonated in the heart of Manhattan.

It appears that dictator Beluga--cornered by insurrectionists in his own ranks--has made good his doomsday threat.

...You must be strong. ãÏƒ^□-ust be brave. You must move swif-□&ä□

Win or lose--the rev-□&ä ends tonigh-□öí□Î>¥I

□öí□Î>¥I-terference-¥LöX-Harmony-□&ä□<ar <zw□

SOMETHING ACTUALLY GOES WRONG.

SHE'S BREAKING UP.

THAT'S HARMONY. HARMONY AND ITS SCREWY ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD.

WE'RE GETTING CLOSE TO HARMONY. THIS IS IT.

VENUS DISCONNECTED. WE'RE ON MANUAL OVERRIDE, KIDS. FORTY SECONDS TO HARMONY.

SHIPS SIX THROUGH TEN -- READY ENTROPY NET. ONE THROUGH FIVE -- BEGIN PHASING SEQUENCE.

"ENTROPY NET"? "PHASING"?

YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE THIS, MARTHA. I TELL YOU, YOU'VE BEEN LIVING IN THE STONE AGE.

INITIATING PHASING SEQUENCE ... WE'RE LOOKING GOOD, KIDS...

EVERY-THING FEELS TINGLY.

THEN EVERYTHING STOPS MAKING ANY SENSE.

?

DAMN IT, COOGAN--USE THE SINGLE FIELD MODE! WE CAN'T EVEN SEE EACH OTHER!

KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON, WASSER-STEIN. I'M NEW AT THIS.

WHAT'S THE DEAL, WASSER-STEIN?

WE'RE INVISIBLE TO RADAR -- AND TO THE EYE. DO YOU LOVE THIS OR WHAT?

THEY DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST US.

NOT UNLESS THEY GET LUCKY. THERE'S NO PREDICTING WHAT THAT LIGHTNING WILL DO.

ONE HIT WE COULD TAKE -- MAYBE EVEN TWO -- BUT IF THEY GET LUCKY...

LUCKY.

DUMB LUCK.

THAT'S ALL THESE CLOWNS HAVE GOING FOR THEM.

DUMB LUCK.

PKAMM PKAMM

CLOWNS.

JUST A WEEK AGO I WAS ONE OF THEM.

Scanning... radar and infrared reports confirm only a single intruder. Continuing scan...

SINGLE SHIP ATTACK UNLIKELY. MORE SHIPS. GHOSTS. DISGUISED.

ANNOYING.

VERY ANNOYING.

BATTLE STATIONS. ALL HANDS.

THERE'S THINGS YOU *LEARN* FIGHTING IN WARS.

LIKE HOW THINGS GO *WRONG*. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER YOUR *PLAN* IS GOOD OR YOUR *EQUIPMENT* WORKS.

THINGS GO *WRONG* ALL THE *TIME*.

Repeat. All hands. Battle stations. We are under attack.

WASHINGTON.

BAD GIRL.

VERY BAD.

REQUIRES SPECIAL ATTENTION.

IS GETTING SPECIAL ATTENTION.

AM PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION.

THERE'S THINGS YOU *LEARN*, FIGHTING IN WARS.

PADAMM

CHOOM CHOOM CHOOM

LIKE HOW *RAIN* MAKES EVERYTHING *SLIPPERY* AND YOU CAN'T *AIM STRAIGHT* IF YOU'RE BEING *SHOT AT* AND YOU HAVE TO SHOOT AT *BIG* THINGS THAT'LL *BLOW UP*.

LIKE HOW *MOST* OF THE TIME YOU AREN'T ANYWHERE *NEAR* WHERE THINGS GET *DECIDED*.

LIKE HOW *MOSTLY* YOU'RE THERE TO RAISE *HELL* AND KEEP THINGS *CONFUSED* WHILE SOMEBODY *ELSE* DOES THE *REAL* WORK.

RIGHT NOW, ABOUT A THOUSAND MILES AWAY, OUR GUYS ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE *AGENTS* SWARMING THROUGH THE *PENTAGON* AND ACROSS *MILITARY BASES* TRYING TO KEEP FROM GETTING FIRED.

BOOM

YEAAARG

PADAMM

RIGHT NOW, ABOUT TWENTY STORIES DOWNSTAIRS FROM HERE, *COOGAN'S* SUPPOSED TO BE LEADING A *SQUAD* TO SHUT DOWN *HARMONY'S* ELECTRO-MAGNETIC *FIELD* SO OUR GUYS CAN MAKE THE *ENTROPY NET*, WHATEVER THAT IS.

BUT ME AND *WASSERSTEIN*, WE AREN'T DOING *ANY* OF THAT.

PADAMM

WE'RE JUST KEEPING THINGS *CONFUSED*.

BOOM

YAAA

WE'RE JUST RAISING *HELL*.

ALL OF A SUDDEN THE *RAIN* STOPS, LIKE IT WAS A *FAUCET* SOMEBODY SHUT OFF.

MIGHT BE THIS MEANS *COOGAN* HAS SHUT HARMONY DOWN. MAYBE I'LL FIND OUT.

MAYBE I'LL BE *ALIVE* TO FIND OUT.

Targeting. Targeting.

AND MAYBE I'LL EVEN FIND OUT WHAT THIS *ENTROPY NET* THING IS.

IT COMES WITH A ROAR LIKE *THUNDER* AND A CRAZY RATTLING FROM *EVERYWHERE*.

ENTROPY.

EVERYTHING'S COMING TO *PIECES*.

WHOOF!

GAAA

WASHING-TON.

BAD GIRL.

VERY BAD. PUNISHMENT REQUIRED. INCISIONS REQUIRED.

NO REASON FOR ANES-THETIC.

BAD GIRL. BAD BOY. VERY BAD.

VERY BAD. REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION.

ARE GETTING SPECIAL ATTENTION.

WASSER-STEIN! NO!

NO!
NO!
NGAAA
HARD OUTSIDE. SOFT INSIDE. VERY SOFT. BAD BOY. REMOVAL OF HEART ADVISABLE.
BAD GIRL. PUNISHMENT REQUIRED. VERY PAINFUL PUNISHMENT.
MUCH BLEEDING.
ANTI-SEPTIC NOT REQUIRED.

VERY PAINFUL.

MUCH BLEEDING. BAD GIRL.

JUST WHEN I **FORGET** ABOUT HER SHE ZAPS RIGHT INTO MY **HEAD** AGAIN.

Martha. We **need** you back **on ship.** It's **imperative.**

Wasserstein is **expendable.** We **need** you back **on ship.** That's an **order.**

YOU GO TO HELL, VENUS. I'M NOT TAKING ANY ORDERS. NOT FROM YOU OR ANYBODY ELSE. NOT ANY-MORE.

REMOVAL OF HEART ADVISABLE. REMOVAL IMMINENT. SURVIVAL OF PATIENT NOT DESIRABLE. ANESTHETIC NOT REQUIRED.

GLAKK

LIVER MAY BE OF USE.

HENFF. LOSING MOTOR INTEGRITY. PROGNOSIS BAD.

VERY BAD.

SQUEEEEEE

BAD GIRL. STUPID GIRL.
TERMINATION OF BOTH SUBJECTS ADVISED.
GYARGG

RESCUED AGAIN. I HOPE YOU REALIZE THIS ISN'T DOING MY EGO ANY GOOD AT ALL...
WHAT THE DEVIL... NO...
OH, NO. DEAR LORD, NO!

VERY BAD.

NUCLEAR MISSILES. THEY GOT THE *NUKES* OFF.

OUR AGENTS AT THE *PENTAGON* AND THE *MILITARY BASES*--THEY *FAILED*.

WASSER-STEIN. HAVE WE COME ALL THIS WAY-- JUST TO GET EVERYBODY *KILLED*?

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

COSTLY VICTORY.

VERY COSTLY.

WASHINGTON. FILTHY GIRL.

NUKES FIRED. LAND SOON.

LOSING HARMONY. VERY BAD.

MANY DIE. WE KILL THE REST.

MANY MUTANTS TO KILL.

ALL WILL DIE.

A BETTER WORLD.

IT WILL BE VERY CLEAN.

NUKES LAND SOON. WE WATCH.

WATCH FIRE.

FIRES BURN ALL.

THEN WE RULE.

IT WILL BE VERY CLEAN.

HNH?

VERY BAD.

FRUSTRATING.

FRUSTRATING.

VERY FRUSTRATING.

2016

I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT MOMENT, TWO YEARS AGO, WHEN I SAW THOSE WARHEADS. I THOUGHT IT WAS THE END OF THE WORLD.

SOMEHOW, OUR SICK, SAD OLD ENEMY HAD PLAYED THEIR FINAL CARD, TRANSMITTING THE ***DOOMSDAY CODE***, ORDERING THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES NUCLEAR ARSENAL TO STRIKE ITS OWN TERRITORY.

I THOUGHT WE'D UNDERESTIMATED THE ENEMY. BUT ALL WE'D UNDERESTIMATED WAS THEIR ***INCOMPETENCE***.

THEY'D SUCCEEDED IN SENDING THE ***DOOMSDAY CODE***, ALL RIGHT -- BUT IT DIDN'T ***WORK***.

LESS THAN ***ONE PERCENT*** OF THEIR ***MISSILES*** EVER LEFT THE ***SILOS*** -- AND THE ONES THAT ***DID***, WELL...

...THEY WERE ***POORLY MAINTAINED***. THEY WERE ***BADLY DESIGNED*** TO BEGIN WITH.

THEY DIDN'T ***WORK***.

IT'S BEEN A ***GOOD*** TIME, A ***BUSY*** TIME. EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE I GET A ***BREAK*** FROM THE ***CLEANUP*** AND GET TO SPEND A FEW WEEKS AT ONE OF OUR ***BASES***.

THERE'S NO END OF THINGS TO ***LEARN***. ***VENUS*** HAS BEEN HELPING ME WITH MY ***HISTORY*** AND MY ***ENGLISH***.

ALL THESE YEARS, I HAD NO IDEA MY ***ENGLISH*** WAS SO LOUSY.

AND THERE'S A CRABBY OLD ***JAPANESE*** GUY EVERYBODY CALLS ***SOURPUSS***. HE'S BEEN TEACHING ME A LOT, TOO.

NOT JUST ABOUT ***COMBAT***, ALTHOUGH WHAT HE'S BEEN TEACHING ME ABOUT ***COMBAT*** HAS BEEN ***ASTOUNDING***.

BUT HE'S ALSO TAUGHT ME ABOUT ***ETHICS*** AND ***PHILOSOPHY*** AND EVEN ***RELIGION*** -- ABOUT EVERYTHING THERE IS TO BEING A ***WARRIOR***, WHICH IS WHAT HE SAYS I AM.

HE'S TEACHING ME ABOUT THE ***DIFFERENCE*** BETWEEN BEING A ***SOLDIER*** AND BEING A ***WARRIOR***.

HE'S LIKE ALL THE ***REST*** OF THESE ***TRAITORS*** I'VE JOINED UP WITH. FULL OF THINGS TO PASS ***ALONG***. FULL OF ***WORLDS*** OF ***HISTORY*** AND ***PHILOSOPHY***. FULL OF ***WONDERS***.

THE THINGS I'M *LEARNING*...

...I'D BEEN TO A MILLION *PLACES* AND FOUGHT IN *DOZENS* OF *BATTLEFIELDS* IN *TWO WARS*, BUT MY WORLD WAS SO *NARROW* AND *SMALL* AND *STUPID*...

THE THINGS I'M LEARNING...

...JUST THE OTHER DAY I INTERRUPTED ONE OF WASSERSTEIN'S POLITICAL *RANTS* AND TOLD HIM HOW *WRONG* HE WAS. AND I ACTUALLY KNEW WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT. I'LL NEVER FORGET THE LOOK ON HIS FACE.

I DON'T GET TO SEE WASSERSTEIN MUCH. THEY'RE KEEPING BOTH OF US PRETTY BUSY AND IT ISN'T OFTEN WE'RE BOTH ON LEAVE AT THE SAME TIME.

BUT WE HAVE SOME NICE *TALKS* WHEN WE DO SEE EACH OTHER.

THEN IT'S BACK TO THE *CLEANUP*, ABOUT WHICH THE LESS SAID THE BETTER.

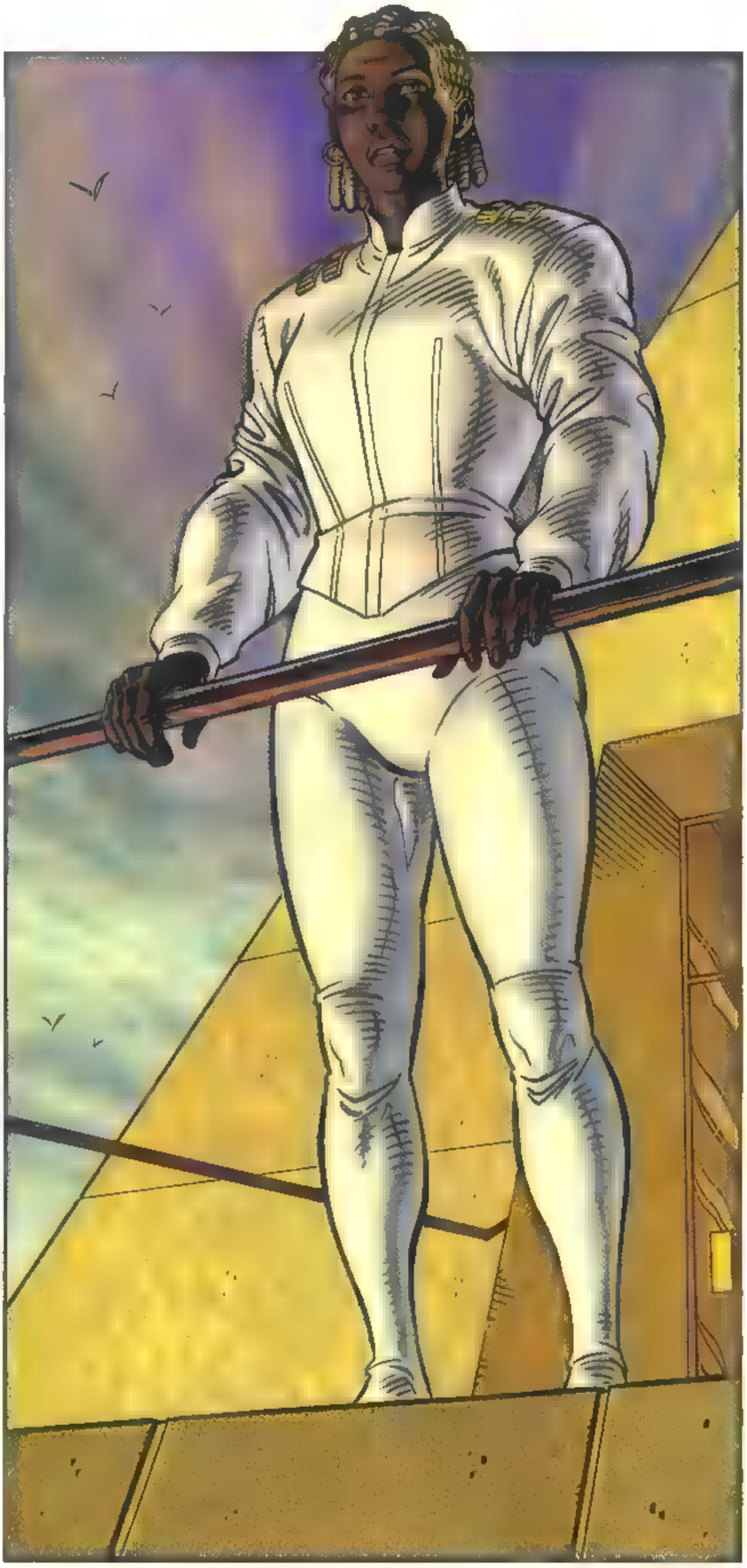
THE WHOLE CONTINENT'S A *MESS*. IT'LL TAKE A FEW MORE YEARS TO GET RID OF THE *POISONS*--AND ALL THE LITTLE *TYRANTS*.

AND IT'LL TAKE LONGER THAN *THAT* FOR PEOPLE TO STOP BEING *SCARED* OF *FREEDOM*.

IT'S HARD WORK. THERE'S NO END OF PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BOSS EACH OTHER AROUND.

THEN THERE'S *EUROPE* AND *ASIA* AND *AFRICA* AND FROM WHAT WE'RE HEARING, THEY'RE IN MUCH WORSE SHAPE THAN AMERICA IS.

HARD WORK, BUT WE'LL DO IT.



WE DON'T HAVE A *FLAG*. WE DON'T HAVE A *NAME*.

GETTING *THIS* CROWD TO AGREE ON *ANYTHING* IS JUST ABOUT *IMPOSSIBLE*.

ALL WE'VE GOT IN COMMON IS *STRONG HEARTS* AND *GOOD MINDS* -- AND ONE GUIDING *PRINCIPLE*.

LIBERTY.

ONE SIMPLE *MISSION*:

TO MAKE A HAPPIER WORLD.

TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD.

I WISH MY MOM WERE ALIVE SO I COULD TELL HER -- IT ALL ADDS *UP* TO SOMETHING.

FROM CABRINI GREEN TO THE AMAZON TO ALL THE SWEATY, BLOODY PLACES WHERE I'VE FOUGHT AND CRIED AND KILLED -- IT ALL ADDS *UP* TO SOMETHING.

I'M HERE TO DO MY *PART*. TO MAKE A *HAPPIER* WORLD.

A BETTER WORLD.

THE END

AFTERWORD

We all borrow from the classics from time to time, and my story for this chapter in the life of Martha Washington is no exception. Faced with the questions of how to present Martha's rite of passage, and how to describe the fundamental changes in Martha's world, I was drawn again and again to the ideas presented by Ayn Rand in her 1957, novel *Atlas Shrugged*. Eschewing the easy, and much-used totalitarian menace made popular by George Orwell, Rand focused instead on issues of competence and incompetence, courage and cowardice, and took the fate of humanity out of the hands of a convenient "Big Brother" and placed it in the hands of individuals with individual strengths and individual choices made for good or evil.

I gratefully and humbly
acknowledge the creative debt.

—Frank Miller

COVER & PINUP GALLERY

Issue #2 cover

Issue #1 cover

Issue #3 cover

Issue #4 cover

Issue #5 cover

art © Mike Mignola

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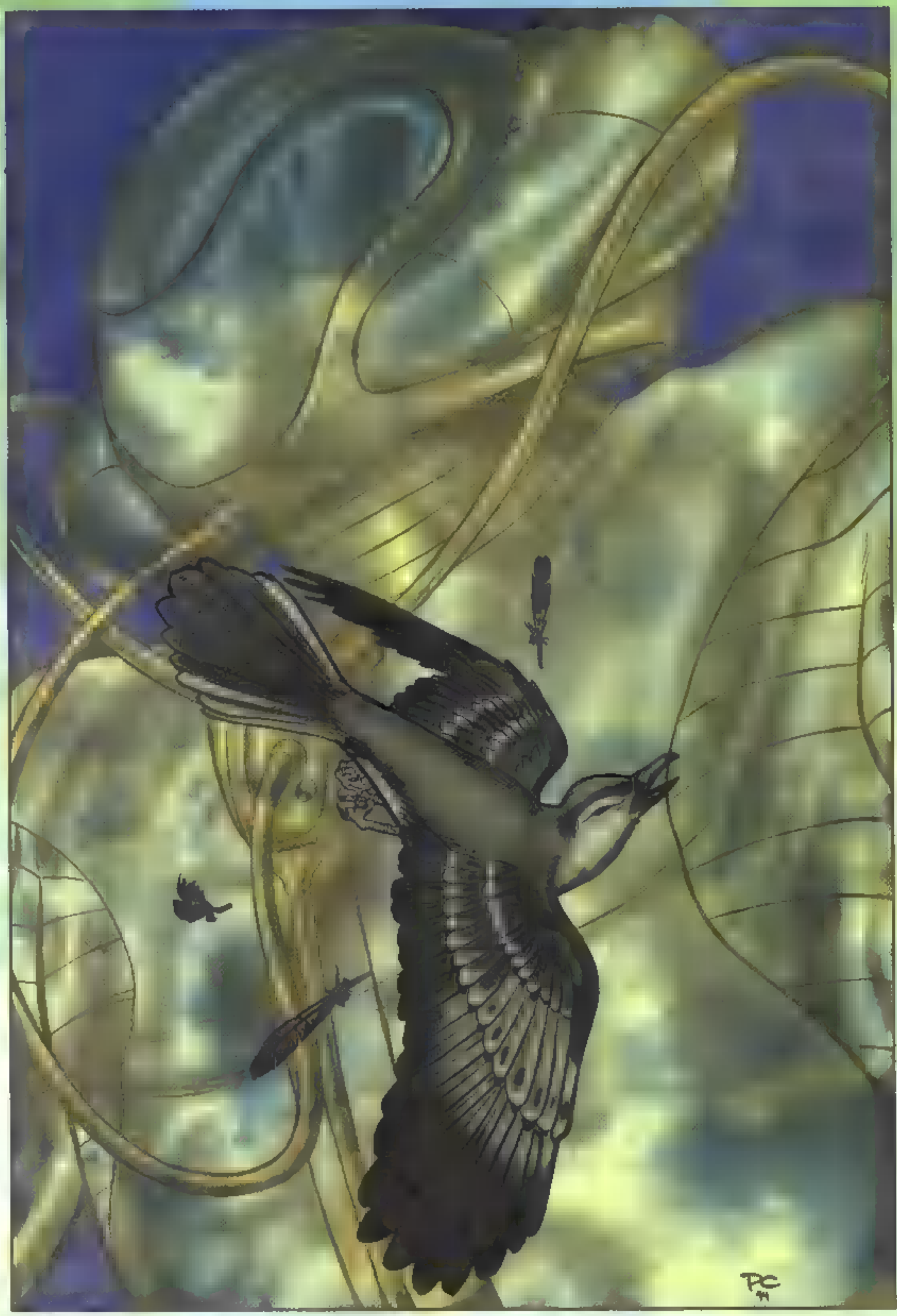

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Dave Gibbons has been a professional cartoonist since 1973. A frequent contributor to *2000 AD*, he co-created Rogue Trooper. Since then, Gibbons has drawn and written for most comics publishers on both sides of the Atlantic. His work has encompassed *Dr. Who*, *Superman*, *Batman*, *Green Lantern*, *Predator*, *Aliens*, *Give Me Liberty*, and the Hugo award-winning *Watchmen*.

MARTHA WASHINGTON

HAS PLAYED A NUMBER OF ROLES IN HER LIFE: PRISONER, RUNAWAY, LUNATIC, SOLDIER. NOW THE PLAYING STOPS AND MARTHA DISCOVERS HER TRUE ROLE — SEDITIONIST.

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